



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE**

March 18, 2008

S. 352

Sunshine in the Courtroom Act of 2008

As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on March 6, 2008

S. 352 would authorize U.S. district and appellate judges and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to permit the photographing, recording, broadcasting, and televising of court proceedings if such activities would not violate the due process rights of the parties involved. The authority provided to district court judges under S. 352 would expire three years after the date of enactment. The bill also would authorize the Judicial Conference of the United States to promulgate advisory guidelines for obscuring the identity of certain types of witnesses from a broadcast audience.

The federal court system currently prohibits the use of still cameras, television cameras, and other electronic recording devices in federal courtrooms. Information from the Administrative Office of the United States Courts indicates that implementing the bill could necessitate equipping a small number of courtrooms with media devices; however, CBO estimates that any resulting increase in federal spending would total less than \$500,000 a year, subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Under the bill, however, a court could require that any such accommodation be made without public expense. Enacting S. 352 would not affect direct spending or revenues.

S. 352 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

On November 1, 2007, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 2128, the Sunshine in the Courtroom Act of 2007, as ordered reported by the House Committee on the Judiciary on October 24, 2007. On December 18, 2007, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for S. 344, a bill to permit the televising of Supreme Court proceedings, as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on December 6, 2007. CBO estimates that implementing each of those bills would cost less than \$500,000 a year, subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Leigh Angres. This estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.