



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE**

October 16, 2002

S. 1651

United States Consensus Council Act of 2002

*As ordered reported by Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs
on October 9, 2002*

S. 1651 would establish the United States Consensus Council, consisting of eight members to be appointed by the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders and the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives. The council would provide advice to the Congress on policy issues of national importance through a collaborative process. The bill would authorize the commission to accept and spend private donations and would direct the General Accounting Office to review the council's annual report. The bill would authorize the appropriation of \$2 million in 2003 and such sums as may be necessary in subsequent fiscal years to carry out its provisions.

CBO estimates that implementing the legislation would cost about \$2 million annually, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. The bill would authorize the commission to earn interest on unspent appropriated funds and spend that amount without further appropriation. CBO estimates that direct spending funded by private contributions and interest earnings would be insignificant.

S. 1651 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

S. 1651 would not allow any business or individual to use the term "United States Consensus Council" or mark of recognition without the consent of the council. If a company or individual is found to be using the name currently and the council does not grant permission for such usage, then the bill would impose a mandate on the private-sector entity. The cost of such a mandate would be equal to the fair market value of the name. In such an instance, the federal government would be required to compensate the owner. A search through the Internet and the U.S. Trademark and Patent Office database found no other use of that name. Although such a search is not exhaustive, CBO expects that the bill would probably not impose a private-sector mandate.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Matthew Pickford. This estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.