



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

November 25, 2013

H.R. 3212 **Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act of 2013**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs
on October 10, 2013*

H.R. 3212 would require several changes to the Department of State's efforts to track and resolve cases of international kidnapping and to prevent such abductions. The department's Office of Children's Issues (OCI) takes the lead on the federal government's response to both types of international child abduction: cases involving countries that are members of an international convention (the Hague Abduction Convention) as well as those involving nonmember countries. CBO estimates that enacting the bill would affect net direct spending; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. Such effects would not be significant, CBO estimates. Enacting the bill would not affect revenues or spending subject to appropriation.

The bill would require the Department of State to:

- Monitor, evaluate, consult with, and report on countries that do not cooperate in or fail to resolve abduction cases and advise the President on subsequent actions that should be taken (as prescribed under the bill),
- Establish memorandums of understanding with countries that are unlikely to join the Hague Abduction Convention,
- Report on certain aspects of its efforts to track and resolve cases of international child abduction and prevent abductions, and
- Notify Members of the Congress about cases of child abduction affecting their constituents.

Based on information from the OCI, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would require the department to hire 10 additional domestic staff and 20 additional overseas staff. The costs in 2014 for those employees would average \$137,000 and \$220,000 respectively, and would grow with inflation in subsequent years. In addition, CBO estimates that OCI would have one-time costs of about \$500,000 to update and revamp its data system to

collect additional information on abduction cases and to generate data for reports to the Congress. In total, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 3212 would have a gross cost of roughly \$6 million each year.

Section 4 would direct the department to use available discretionary funds to implement the bill. The department has significant balances remaining from existing appropriations. If those balances were used to implement the bill, direct spending would increase by \$6 million each year.

However, the OCI is funded by nonimmigrant visa fees that are retained by the department and spent on consular activities (the OCI is part of the department's bureau of Consular Affairs), and the department has indicated that it would raise those visa fees to cover the costs of implementing H.R. 3212. Those additional collections would represent a credit against direct spending. CBO estimates that the increase in spending to implement the bill and the increase in offsetting collections would offset so that the net effect of the bill on direct spending in any year and over the 2014-2023 period would be insignificant.

H.R. 3212 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA). The bill could impose private-sector mandates, as defined in UMRA, by directing the President to take one or more actions to compel foreign countries to cooperate in cases involving international child abduction. Among the actions that could be applied against foreign countries are sanctions that would impose mandates on entities in the private sector. For example, a sanction could prohibit entities from engaging in transactions under export license agreements with entities in targeted foreign countries. The cost of the mandate would be any forgone income associated with newly prohibited activities under the sanctions imposed. CBO expects that few, if any, private entities would be affected by the sanction provisions in the bill and that the cost of a mandate, if imposed, would probably fall below the annual threshold for private-sector mandates established in UMRA (\$150 million in 2013, adjusted annually for inflation).

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Sunita D'Monte (for federal costs) and Marin Burnett (for the impact on the private sector). The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.