



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

March 9, 2015

S. 178

Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015

As reported by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on March 2, 2015

CBO estimates that implementing S. 178 would cost about \$1 million in fiscal year 2016 and less than \$500,000 each year thereafter, from appropriated funds. In addition, CBO estimates that enacting S. 178 would increase direct spending by \$2 million over the 2015-2025 period and could also affect revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply.

S. 178 contains many provisions that aim to prevent human trafficking and assist victims of such activities. The bill would require the Department of Justice (DOJ) to improve current training programs for law enforcement officers and prosecutors who are involved in combatting human trafficking and to prepare an annual report on the enforcement of sex trafficking laws by states. Based on the costs of similar activities, we estimate that those provisions would cost about \$1 million in fiscal year 2016 and less than \$500,000 annually thereafter, assuming the availability of appropriated funds.

The bill would direct federal courts to impose a \$5,000 assessment on non-indigent persons convicted of certain offenses involving sexual abuse or human trafficking. Collections of the assessments would be classified in the budget as revenues and deposited into a new fund, the Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund, and spent by DOJ—without further appropriation action—on programs to assist trafficking victims. CBO estimates that all revenues from the new assessment would be spent on programs for trafficking victims and, thus, enacting this provision would have no significant net effect on the deficit over the next 10 years.

S. 178 would make lawful permanent residents (LPRs) who are victims of severe forms of trafficking eligible for federal benefits to the same extent as refugees. Notably, LPR trafficking victims who are otherwise eligible would no longer face a waiting period before they could receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. Based on information from DOJ about noncitizens who access services for victims of trafficking, CBO expects that under S. 178, a few dozen LPRs would begin receiving SNAP and SSI benefits a few years earlier than they would under current law. CBO estimates that enacting S. 178 would increase direct spending for

those benefits by less than \$500,000 in each year, and by \$2 million over the 2015-2025 period.

S. 178 also would broaden the coverage of current laws against human trafficking. As a result, the government might be able to increase the number of successful prosecutions in these cases. CBO expects that the bill would apply to a relatively small number of offenders, however, so any increase in costs for law enforcement, court proceedings, or prison operations would not be significant. Any such costs would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Because those prosecuted and convicted under S. 178 could be subject to criminal fines, the federal government might collect additional fines if the legislation is enacted. Criminal fines are recorded as revenues, deposited in the Crime Victims Fund, and later spent. CBO expects that any additional revenues and direct spending would not be significant because of the small number of cases likely to be affected.

S. 178 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Mark Grabowicz and David Rafferty. The estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.