

S. 2132, Promoting Security and Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act of 2019
 As reported by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on October 21, 2019

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2020	2020-2024	2020-2029
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	0	*	not estimated
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No	Mandate Effects	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2030?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No
* = between zero and \$500,000.			

Under current law, U.S. citizens who are victims of international terrorism can sue in a U.S. district court to obtain compensatory and punitive damages from those who commit, aid, or abet terrorist activity. Terrorist entities, organizations, or foreign states that support terrorism are subject to the jurisdiction of federal courts if they meet certain conditions, including accepting assistance from the United States or maintaining an office or establishment within the United States.

S. 2132 would change the criteria for establishing jurisdiction over terrorist entities if the defendant in a case is the Palestinian Authority (PA), the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), or any organization or entity that represents Palestine in connection with official business of the United Nations.

The bill would establish federal jurisdiction over a defendant—and therefore enable U.S. victims to file suit—if the entity:

- Makes any payment to an individual (or to his or her family) who has been tried or pleaded guilty to an act of terrorism that injured or killed a U.S. national and has subsequently been imprisoned for that act,
- Conducts any activity while physically present in the United States on behalf of the PA or the PLO, or

- Applies for or maintains standing equivalent to membership in the United Nations or an affiliated agency.

In addition, the bill would permit the PA and the PLO to accept U.S. economic and security assistance without subjecting themselves to the jurisdiction of U.S. courts.

CBO expects that marginally expanding the grounds for jurisdiction over the PA and the PLO under S. 2132 could lead to a small increase in the number of civil actions filed by victims in federal courts. However, because the number of additional suits probably would be small and those cases would be litigated between private parties and foreign entities, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would not result in any significant costs to the federal judiciary.

S. 2132 would require the Department of State to meet with U.S. nationals and representatives of the PA and the PLO to facilitate the settlement of claims. In addition, the department would be required to report annually to the Congress on those activities. Using information about the department's costs for similar activities, CBO estimates that facilitating settlements and providing the required reports would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2020-2024 period; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Jon Sperl (for the federal judiciary) and Sunita D'Monte (for the Department of State). The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.