



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

November 21, 2001

H.R. 3209 **Anti-Hoax Terrorism Act of 2001**

As ordered reported by the House Committee on the Judiciary on November 15, 2001

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 3209 would not result in any significant cost to the federal government. Because enactment of H.R. 3209 could affect direct spending and receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply to the bill. However, CBO estimates that any impact on direct spending and receipts would not be significant. H.R. 3209 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

H.R. 3209 would establish a new federal crime for the perpetration of hoaxes involving the threat of biological agents or other weapons of mass destruction. Offenders would be subject to imprisonment and criminal and civil fines.

Under the provisions of H.R. 3209, the government would be able to pursue cases involving hoaxes that it otherwise would not be able to prosecute. Because there are similar prohibitions on hoaxes in current law, however, CBO expects that the bill's provisions would probably affect a small number of additional cases. Thus, 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 H.R. 3209 could be subject to fines, the federal government might collect additional fines if the legislation is enacted. Collections of civil fines are recorded in the budget as governmental receipts (revenues). Criminal fines are deposited as receipts in the Crime Victims Fund and later spent. CBO expects that any additional receipts and direct spending would be negligible because of the small number of cases involved.

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