



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

November 14, 1997

### **S. 1371**

### **Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act of 1997**

*As reported by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on November 10, 1997*

CBO estimates that enacting S. 1371 would not result in any significant cost to the federal government. Because enactment of S. 1371 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. S. 1371 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 and would have no impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

S. 1371 would establish federal felony violations for the failure to pay child support. Violators would be subject to imprisonment, fines, and mandatory restitution of the unpaid child support. Under current law the failure to pay child support payments is a misdemeanor, and the Department of Justice pursues, on average, about 150 cases each year. CBO expects that enacting S. 1371 would not significantly increase federal caseload; therefore, we estimate that any increase in federal law enforcement, federal court costs, or prison costs would not be significant. Any such additional costs would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Because those prosecuted and convicted of failing to fulfill their child support obligations could be subject to fines, the government might collect additional fines if S. 1371 is enacted. Collections of such fines are recorded in the budget as governmental receipts, or revenues, which are deposited in the Crime Victims Fund and spent in the following year. Any additional collections from enacting S. 1371 are likely to be negligible, however, because it is not likely that the federal government would pursue a significant number of additional cases under this bill. Because any increase in direct spending would equal the fines collected with a one-year lag, the additional direct spending also would be negligible.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Susanne S. Mehlman. This estimate was approved by Paul N. Van de Water, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.