

At a Glance

H.R. 9076, Protecting America’s Children by Strengthening Families Act

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Ways and Means on July 24, 2024

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars		2025	2025-2029	2025-2034
Direct Spending (Outlays)		0	228	610
Revenues		0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit		0	228	610
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)		0	1,606	2,176
Increases <i>net direct spending</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2035?	< \$2.5 billion	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?		Yes
		Mandate Effects		
Increases <i>on-budget deficits</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2035?	< \$5 billion	Contains intergovernmental mandate?		No
		Contains private-sector mandate?		No
The bill would				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reauthorize and amend child welfare programs authorized under title IV-B of the Social Security Act• Increase funding for the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program by \$75 million per year starting in 2026• Require states to submit a plan to ensure that families receive legal representation during foster care proceedings• Authorize the appropriation of funding for children and family services programs• Require the Department of Health and Human Services to report information to the Congress				
Estimated budgetary effects would mainly stem from				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing funding for the PSSF program• Spending funds authorized to be appropriated for children and family services programs• Complying with reporting requirements				
Detailed estimate begins on the next page.				

See also

[CBO’s Cost Estimates Explained](#), [CBO Describes Its Cost-Estimating Process](#), [Glossary](#)



Bill Summary

H.R. 9076 would reauthorize and amend child welfare programs authorized under title IV-B of the Social Security Act.

Estimated Federal Cost

The estimated budgetary effect of H.R. 9076 is shown in Table 1. The costs of the legislation fall within budget function 500 (education, employment, training, and social services).

Table 1.
Estimated Budgetary Effects of H.R. 9076

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars										2025-2029	2025-2034
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034		
Increases in Direct Spending												
Estimated Budget Authority	0	72	73	74	76	76	76	78	80	80	295	685
Estimated Outlays	0	21	61	72	74	75	75	76	77	79	228	610
Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation												
Estimated Authorization	0	560	561	560	561	0	0	0	0	0	2,242	2,242
Estimated Outlays	0	151	411	511	533	390	133	32	12	3	1,606	2,176

Basis of Estimate

As specified in H.R. 9076, CBO assumes this legislation would be effective October 1, 2025. The bill would authorize the appropriation of funding for children and family service programs for 2025-2029. However, because the bill would be effective beginning in 2026, CBO does not attribute costs to the authorization for 2025. Estimated outlays are based on historical spending patterns of the affected programs. The estimate also incorporates the effects of across-the-board reductions in mandatory resources known as sequestration.

Direct Spending

H.R. 9076 would increase mandatory funding for the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program and require states to include a plan for providing legal representation to families moving through the judicial system. CBO estimates that enacting those provisions would increase direct spending by \$610 million over the 2025-2034 period (see Table 2).



Table 2.
Estimated Increases in Direct Spending Under H.R. 9076

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars										2025- 2029	2025- 2034
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034		
Increase funding for PSSF												
Budget Authority	0	71	71	71	71	71	71	73	75	75	284	649
Estimated Outlays	0	20	59	69	69	70	70	71	72	74	217	574
Legal representation												
Estimated Budget Authority	0	1	2	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	11	36
Estimated Outlays	0	1	2	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	11	36
Total Increases												
Estimated Budget Authority	0	72	73	74	76	76	76	78	80	80	295	685
Estimated Outlays	0	21	61	72	74	75	75	76	77	79	228	610

PSSF = Promoting Safe and Stable Families.

Promoting Safe and Stable Families. H.R. 9076 would increase funding for the mandatory portion of PSSF, a program authorized by title IV-B subpart 2 of the Social Security Act that provides grants to states for family preservation and support services. The underlying authorization of \$345 million per year expired in 2023, but lawmakers provided funding at that level through December 31, 2024. The bill would provide \$420 million for each year over the 2026-2029 period.

Following the rules in the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (BBEDCA), CBO's baseline projections incorporate the assumption that funding for the program will continue at the level in place immediately before the authorization expires, or \$345 million per year. From 2026 through 2029, the bill would increase the annual funding for the program by \$75 million; following the rules in BBEDCA, CBO assumes that funding for the program would continue to be \$420 million in each year after 2029.

Under current law, amounts provided for the program are subject to sequestration, or the cancellation of budgetary resources. Thus, the amount of budget authority available for obligation is 5.7 percent less than the amount provided in statute in each year over the 2025-2031 period and 2.85 percent less in 2032.

After accounting for the effects of sequestration, CBO estimates that enacting the bill would increase the mandatory budget authority available to the program by \$71 million in 2026 and by \$649 million over the 2025-2034 period. Based on historical spending patterns, CBO estimates that enacting the provision would increase direct spending by \$574 million over the 2025-2034 period, relative to CBO's baseline projections.



Legal Representation. H.R. 9076 would require states to submit a plan to ensure that children and their parents receive legal representation during foster care proceedings. Current law requires states to submit a foster care plan to be eligible to receive grants for child and family services under title IV-B of the Social Security Act. The bill would expand that requirement.

The federal government reimburses states for a portion of their administrative costs, including the cost of providing legal representation for families involved in foster care proceedings. CBO expects that requiring states to submit a plan for providing legal representation would increase claims for administrative support. On the basis of information provided by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), CBO estimates that implementing the provision would increase direct spending by \$36 million over the 2025-2034 period.

Spending Subject to Appropriation

H.R. 9076 would authorize the appropriation of \$2.2 billion over the 2025-2029 period for children and family services programs. It also would require the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to produce six reports to the Congress. CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 9076 would cost \$1.6 billion over the 2025-2029 period and \$570 million after 2029, assuming appropriation of the specified and authorized amounts (see Table 3).

Table 3.
Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under H.R. 9076

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars					2025-2029
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	
Discretionary grant programs						
Authorization	0	525	525	525	525	2,100
Estimated Outlays	0	144	389	483	499	1,515
Strengthening Relationships with Incarcerated parents						
Authorization	0	35	35	35	35	140
Estimated Outlays	0	7	21	28	33	89
HHS reporting requirements						
Estimated Authorization	0	*	1	*	1	2
Estimated Outlays	0	*	1	*	1	2
Total Increases						
Estimated Authorization	0	560	561	560	561	2,242
Estimated Outlays	0	151	411	511	533	1,606

* = between zero and \$500,000.

Discretionary grant programs. Section 3 of H.R. 9076 would authorize the appropriation of \$325 million annually over the 2026-2029 period for the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services Program and \$200 million annually for the discretionary portion of PSSF over the same period. (Lawmakers provided \$269 million and \$73 million for those purposes



in fiscal year 2024, respectively, and funding at that level through December 20, 2024.) Assuming the appropriation of the specified amounts, CBO estimates that implementing section 3 would cost \$1.5 billion over the 2025-2029 period and \$523 million after 2029.

Strengthening relationships with incarcerated parents. Section 13 of H.R. 9076 would authorize the appropriation of \$35 million annually over the 2026-2029 period for grants to strengthen relationships between foster children and their incarcerated parents. Assuming the appropriation of the specified amounts, CBO estimates that implementing section 13 would cost \$89 million over the same period and \$47 million after 2029.

HHS reporting requirements. H.R. 9076 would require HHS to report to the Congress on:

- Programs funded by regional partnership grants;
- Efforts undertaken by the agency to reduce administrative burden for grant recipients;
- States' level of compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978;
- Grants awarded to accelerate access to Family First Prevention Services;
- Grants awarded to improve relationships between foster children and their incarcerated parents; and
- Children who reenter foster care after finalization of an adoption or legal guardianship.

Based on the cost of similar activities, CBO estimates that producing the reports would cost \$2 million over the 2026-2029 period. Any spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Pay-As-You-Go Considerations

The Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 establishes budget-reporting and enforcement procedures for legislation affecting direct spending or revenues. The net changes in outlays that are subject to those pay-as-you-go procedures are shown under the "Direct Spending" heading in Table 1.

Increase in Long-Term Net Direct Spending and Deficits

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 9076 would increase net direct spending by less than \$2.5 billion in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2035.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 9076 would increase on-budget deficits by less than \$5 billion in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2035.



Mandates

H.R. 9076 would not impose mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA). The bill would amend and expand the duties imposed on child welfare programs operated by states under title IV-B, including a requirement to provide additional legal representation in judicial proceedings involving an allegation of child abuse or neglect. Although UMRA includes special instructions for identifying mandates in amendments to certain entitlement programs that provide funding to states, the programs amended under the bill are not large enough to qualify. Therefore, CBO considers the new requirements imposed by the bill to be conditions of federal assistance, which are not mandates under UMRA.

Estimate Prepared By

Federal Costs:

Susanne Mehlman (legal representation)
Delaney Smith (all other provisions)

Mandates: Andrew Laughlin

Estimate Reviewed By

Elizabeth Cove Delisle
Chief, Income Security Cost Estimates Unit

Kathleen FitzGerald
Chief, Public and Private Mandates Unit

Christina Hawley Anthony
Deputy Director of Budget Analysis

Estimate Approved By

Phillip L. Swagel
Director, Congressional Budget Office