



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

March 5, 2010

H.R. 3190 **Discount Pricing Consumer Protection Act of 2009**

As ordered reported by the House Committee on the Judiciary on January 13, 2010

H.R. 3190 would prohibit agreements between manufacturers and wholesalers, distributors, or retailers to set minimum prices for a product or service. The bill would negate the effects of a 2007 Supreme Court decision (*Leegin Creative Leather Products, Inc. v. PSKS, Inc.*, 551 U.S. 877 (2007)) that permits minimum price agreements in certain cases.

Based on information from the Department of Justice, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would have no significant effect on the department's spending to handle cases involving minimum price agreements.

Pay-as-you-go procedures would apply to the legislation because violators of the bill's provisions could be subject to civil and criminal fines. Criminal fines are deposited as revenues in the Crime Victims Fund and later spent. However, CBO estimates that any additional revenues and direct spending would not be significant in each year.

H.R. 3190 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

Prohibiting contracts between manufacturers and wholesalers, distributors, or retailers to set minimum retail prices would impose a private-sector mandate as defined in UMRA. Any existing or future contracts that set such prices would be a violation of anti-trust law.

The cost of that mandate would be any forgone net income resulting from prohibiting such agreements; however, how such prohibitions would affect industry income is uncertain for several reasons. Although a large number of firms could be affected by the mandate, contracts involving pricing policies are confidential and can vary widely across markets. Further, the cost of the legislation would be mitigated to some extent because

several states already prohibit such contracts and because firms could continue to use noncontractual policies that have the effect of setting minimum resale prices. Because of those uncertainties, CBO cannot determine whether the costs would exceed the annual threshold established in UMRA for private-sector mandates (\$141 million in 2010, adjusted annually for inflation).

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Mark Grabowicz (for federal costs) and Marin Randall (for the private-sector impact). The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.