

S. 2524, a bill to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to exclude certain payments to aged, blind, or disabled Alaska Natives or descendants of Alaska Natives from being used to determine eligibility or certain programs, and for other purposes

As reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on February 10, 2022

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2022	2022-2027	2022-2032
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	*	1
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	*	1
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	0	*	1
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	Yes	Mandate Effects	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2033?	< \$5 billion	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No
* = between zero and \$500,000.			

S. 2524 would exclude distributions and benefits paid from a settlement trust to an Alaska Native, or his or her descendant, who is aged, blind, or disabled when calculating eligibility for needs-based federal programs, such as housing assistance and benefits provided through the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program and Medicaid. Under current law, most payments from settlement trusts that are less than \$2,000 annually are already exempt.

Using information from federal agencies and organizations that represent Alaska Native communities, CBO estimates that a small number of households would become eligible for additional federal benefits because their annual distributions would exceed \$2,000. CBO expects that under S. 2524 a small number of people would qualify for additional assistance under the SSI program. Because people who are enrolled in SSI automatically qualify for Medicaid coverage, the number of Medicaid recipients also would increase.

Under the bill, and based on information from the two programs, CBO expects that beginning in 2023 additional costs would total about \$80,000 a year—\$30,000 for SSI and \$50,000 for Medicaid. Thus, CBO estimates that enacting S. 2524 would increase direct spending by \$1 million over the 2022-20232 period.



In addition, using information from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, CBO expects that under the bill a small number of additional households would qualify for housing assistance of about \$700 monthly, beginning in 2023. CBO estimates that providing housing benefits to the additional households would cost \$1 million over the 2022-2032 period; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Using information from the Department of Agriculture, CBO expects that enacting the bill would not affect eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits because the program already excludes settlement trust benefits (regardless of the amount) when determining eligibility.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Jennifer Gray (for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), Justin Latus (for Supplemental Security Income), Zunara Naeem (for the Department of Housing and Urban Development), Jon Sperl (for the Bureau of Indian Affairs), and Robert Stewart (for Medicaid). The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.