



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE  
COST ESTIMATE**

October 7, 2005

**H.R. 584**

**Department of the Interior Volunteer Recruitment Act of 2005**

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
on September 28, 2005*

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 584 would not significantly affect the federal budget. The legislation could increase direct spending, but we estimate that any such effects would be negligible. Enacting H.R. 584 would not affect revenues. H.R. 584 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

This legislation would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to recruit and use volunteers to assist with programs carried out by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Office of the Secretary. It would authorize the Secretary to provide for services and expenses incidental to the use of those volunteers as well as coverage for tort claim liability and workers' compensation.

Under current law, other agencies within the Department of the Interior (DOI) already have authority to recruit and use volunteers. Based on information from DOI about the cost of operating those agencies' volunteer programs, CBO estimates that extending that authority to other agencies under H.R. 584 would cost less than \$500,000 a year, assuming the availability of appropriated funds. In some cases, payments to or on behalf of volunteers resulting from tort claims could be made from the U.S. Treasury's Judgment Fund; hence, H.R. 584 could result in an increase in direct spending. Based on the amount of such claims paid under DOI's existing volunteer programs, however, CBO estimates that any increase in direct spending under H.R. 584 would be negligible.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Megan Carroll. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.