



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

March 2, 2015

H.R. 216

Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Planning Reform Act of 2015

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on February 12, 2015

H.R. 216 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to submit several reports to the Congress and to designate a current Assistant Secretary as the Chief Strategy Officer (CSO) for the department. CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 216 would cost \$3 million over the 2016-2020 period, subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Enacting H.R. 216 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

Section 2 would require VA to submit to the Congress several reports. The first report would be entitled the Future-Years Veterans Program and would include a spending plan for the subsequent five years as well as a plan for meeting the goals of the department. It would be included as part of VA's annual budget submission to the Congress, starting with the budget submission for 2020. VA also would be required to complete a quadrennial review of the policies, strategies, benefits, and services for veterans provided by the department. That review would start in 2019 and be completed every four years thereafter. Based on the costs of existing reporting requirements, CBO estimates that preparing the required report and review would cost \$1 million over the 2016-2020 period.

In every year for which a quadrennial review is being conducted, VA also would be required to establish an Independent Veterans Review Panel of 10 individuals appointed by the Congress and VA to conduct a review and assessment of the assumptions, strategies, and findings of the quadrennial review. The individuals comprising the Independent Veteran Review Panel would be eligible for compensation not to exceed the pay for a federal employee being paid at the GS-15 General Schedule pay rate. Based on this information, CBO estimates that operating the review panel would cost about \$1 million over the 2016-2020 period.

Section 3 would require VA to designate a current Assistant Secretary as the CSO for the department. The CSO would be responsible for providing advice and analysis regarding the programming and budgeting of department activities. CBO estimates that providing a staff to support activities of the CSO would cost \$1 million over the 2016-2020 period.

H.R. 216 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.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Dwayne M. Wright. The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.