



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

July 13, 2012

H.R. 4631 GSA Act of 2012

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
on June 27, 2012*

H.R. 4631 would require agencies to provide quarterly reports to the Congress about meetings or events involving travel expenses paid with federal funds. Over the 2013-2017 period, the bill would restrict agencies' authority to obligate funds for travel expenses (other than military travel) to 70 percent of the amount spent on travel costs in 2010. In addition, under the legislation, agencies would be prohibited from spending more than \$500,000 to support a single conference. Finally, H.R. 4631 would require agencies to post any presentation materials provided at a conference sponsored by an agency or attended by federal employees on their Web sites so it would be available to the public.

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 4631 would have no significant net impact on the budget over the 2013-2017 period. We expect that there would be some minor additional administrative costs for agencies to report on their travel expenses to the Congress and to post materials on Web sites. In 2010, civilian agencies spent about \$6.5 billion on travel expenses. By limiting the ability of agencies to obligate funds for travel costs over the 2013-2017 period to 70 percent of the amount spent in 2010, the legislation would likely shift spending on travel to other categories, such as telecommunications and computer technologies. CBO expects, however, that such a limitation on travel expenditures would not result in significantly less total spending by federal agencies. Any change in costs as a result of implementing H.R. 4631 would depend on the amounts provided in future appropriation acts.

The bill could affect direct spending by agencies not funded through annual appropriations; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. CBO estimates, however, that any net change in spending by those agencies would not be significant. Enacting H.R. 4631 would not affect revenues.

H.R. 4631 would impose intergovernmental mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) by limiting the District of Columbia's spending on travel to 70 percent of the amount expended in 2010, by prohibiting the District from paying for travel expenses of more than 50 employees to attend an international conference—unless approved by the Department of State, and by requiring the District to post information on

its Web site about conferences that its employees attend. CBO estimates that the costs of the intergovernmental mandates would be small and would not exceed the threshold established in UMRA (\$73 million in 2012, adjusted annually for inflation). H.R. 4631 contains no private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Matthew Pickford (for federal costs) and Elizabeth Cove Delisle (for the impact on state and local governments). This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.