



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

February 23, 2000

### **H.R. 3193** **Duty to Assist Veterans Act of 1999**

*As introduced on November 2, 1999*

#### **SUMMARY**

H.R. 3193 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide assistance to veterans who file claims for VA benefits. CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost \$4 million in 2001 and \$7 million to \$8 million annually thereafter, assuming appropriation of the necessary funds. Because the bill would not affect direct spending or receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. H.R. 3193 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

#### **ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

The estimated budgetary impact of the bill is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 700 (veterans affairs).

#### **BASIS OF ESTIMATE**

H.R. 3193 would require VA to assist all veterans that file a claim for benefits. The bill would direct VA to tell the veteran what information is needed to complete a pending claim and to collect from other federal agencies any information needed to support that claim. It would also require VA to seek information a veteran has authorized the department to obtain, to inform the veteran when the department is unable to obtain information pertinent to a claim, and to provide a medical exam to certain claimants with low incomes.

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars					
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION</b>						
Spending Under Current Law for VA's General Operating Expenses						
Estimated Authorization Level <sup>a</sup>	941	941	941	941	941	941
Estimated Outlays	925	941	941	941	941	941
Proposed Changes						
Estimated Authorization Level	0	4	7	8	8	8
Estimated Outlays	0	4	7	7	8	8
Spending Under H.R. 3193 for VA's General Operating Expenses						
Estimated Authorization Level <sup>a</sup>	941	945	948	949	949	949
Estimated Outlays	925	945	948	948	949	949

NOTE: This table assumes that funding under current law will remain at the level appropriated for 2000 without adjustment for inflation. If funding over the 2001-2005 period is adjusted for inflation, the base amounts would increase by about \$35 million a year, but the cost of the proposed changes would remain as shown.

a. The 2000 level is the amount appropriated for that year.

CBO expects that, in order to carry out its responsibilities under H.R. 3193, VA would have to hire additional claims adjudicators. Based on information from the VA, CBO assumes that 110 additional claims adjudicators would be hired at an estimated cost of \$3 million in salary and benefits in 2001 and about \$7 million annually thereafter. CBO estimates that training would cost about \$1 million a year and that one-time costs associated with expanding the claims processing staff would be about \$700,000 in 2001. The cost of providing medical exams is covered under current law.

**PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS:** None.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT**

H.R. 3193 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

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