



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

June 21, 2002

H.R. 4858

A bill to improve access to physicians in medically underserved areas

As ordered reported by the House Committee on the Judiciary on June 19, 2002

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 4858 would result in no significant net cost to the federal government. The bill would affect direct spending, so pay-as-you-go procedures would apply, but we estimate that any effects would be insignificant. H.R. 4858 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

Until June 1, 2002, foreign students attending medical school in the United States were permitted to remain here after graduation if they agreed to work in rural areas for at least three years or accepted employment with certain federal agencies. This program was limited to 20 individuals a year for each state that participated in the program. Currently such individuals must return to their native countries. H.R. 4858 would reestablish this program through June 1, 2004, and would increase the limit on the number of participants to 30 for each state.

Based on the participation of foreign medical students in these employment programs in recent years, CBO expects that the bill's provisions would affect about 1,500 persons annually. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) would collect fees to provide work permits for these individuals. The agency is authorized to spend such fees without further appropriation, so the net impact on INS spending would be insignificant. INS fees are classified as offsetting receipts (a credit against direct spending).

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