



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

June 22, 2006

### **H.R. 3508**

#### **2005 District of Columbia Omnibus Authorization Act**

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security  
and Governmental Affairs on June 15, 2006*

H.R. 3508 would amend federal laws applicable to the District of Columbia (D.C.). Most of the provisions would affect operations of the D.C. government, including authorizing the use of local funds for emergency spending, permanently authorizing the District's Chief Financial Officer, requiring fiscal impact statements for all legislation passed by the D.C. Council, and allowing the District to enter into compacts with states regarding insurance regulations. CBO estimates that implementing those provisions would not have a significant impact on the federal budget.

H.R. 3508 also would authorize lifting the salary cap on the pay-for-performance system used for senior-level employees of the D.C. Courts. The act would make D.C. court employees eligible for an enhanced dental and vision benefit program, allow the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) to use volunteers and accept gifts, authorize D.C. Public Defender Services to charge fees for conference materials, and allow spending of fines for alcohol-related traffic violations. Under the National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997, the budget of the D.C. Courts system is funded by federal appropriations, and its expenditures are recorded on the federal budget. Based on information from the D.C. Courts, CSOSA, D.C. Defender Services, and the Office of Personnel Management, CBO estimates that those provisions would not have a significant effect on federal spending subject to appropriation, direct spending, or federal revenues.

H.R. 3508 would require the District of Columbia to compel taxicabs to charge fares based on a meter rather than a zone system, although the mayor would be authorized to waive the requirement. Such a duty on the District of Columbia government would constitute an intergovernmental mandate as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA). It is unclear if the District of Columbia or private cab companies would be required to pay for the meters, but CBO estimates that the costs of the mandate would likely total less than \$5 million and thus would not exceed the threshold established in UMRA (\$64 million in

2006, adjusted annually for inflation.) Other provisions of H.R. 3508 would benefit the District of Columbia or codify existing practice.

The legislation contains no private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA.

On October 15, 2005, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 3508, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Government Reform on September 15, 2005. That version of the bill did not contain the provision requiring the District of Columbia to have taxicabs that charge fares using a meter system. The mandates statements reflect the differences. Other provisions of the bills are similar and the estimated costs are the same.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate is Matthew Pickford (for federal costs) and Sarah Puro (for state and local impact). This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.