



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE  
COST ESTIMATE**

October 22, 2015

**H.R. 1338  
Dignified Interment of Our Veterans Act of 2015**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
on September 17, 2015*

H.R. 1338 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to limit the amounts of awards and bonuses paid to senior executive service (SES) employees and require VA to study matters related to unclaimed remains of veterans. On net, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 1338 would reduce costs by \$1 million over the 2016-2020 period, assuming appropriation actions consistent with the bill. Enacting H.R. 1338 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

Section 3 would limit to \$2 million the total amount VA could pay in awards and bonuses to SES employees in 2016. From 2008 to 2012, VA paid an average of about \$3.5 million each year in such awards and bonuses. Assuming such payments will continue at about that level under current law, adjusted for inflation, CBO estimates that implementing section 3 would reduce discretionary spending for personnel by about \$2 million over the 2016-2020 period, assuming appropriation actions consistent with the bill.

Section 2 would require VA to complete a study and submit a report to the Congress on issues and procedures related to burying unclaimed remains of veterans in national cemeteries under the control of the National Cemetery Administration. As part of the study, VA would need to contact funeral homes and coroner offices around the nation to estimate the number of such remains; assess state and local laws that affect VA's ability to take custody of such remains; and, develop recommendations for legislative and administrative actions needed to enable VA to inter all such remains in national cemeteries. Based on information from VA, CBO estimates that implementing section 2 within the one-year period allotted would cost \$1 million over the 2016-2020 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 1338 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2026.

H.R. 1338 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.

On June 9, 2015, CBO transmitted an estimate for H.R. 1607, the Ruth Moore Act of 2015, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on May 21, 2015. Section 3 of H.R. 1607 would limit the amount VA could pay in bonuses to SES staff over the 2016-2018 period, whereas section 3 of H.R. 1338 would limit the amount VA could pay in bonuses to SES employees only in 2016. CBO's estimates of the budgetary effects for those provisions reflect that difference in bill language.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Dwayne M. Wright. The estimate was approved by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.