



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

September 18, 2012

### **S. 2388** **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Amendments Act of 2012**

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,  
and Transportation on July 31, 2012*

S. 2388 would modify certain personnel policies for the commissioned officer corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Based on information provided by NOAA, CBO estimates that implementing the legislation would have no significant impact on the federal budget. Enacting the legislation could affect offsetting receipts (a credit against direct spending) from payments made by individuals who enter the corps but fail to complete their required service obligations as well as revenues from fines levied on individuals who wear the uniform of the NOAA commissioned officer corps without proper authorization. Therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. However, CBO estimates that any such impacts would be insignificant.

The bill would establish service requirements for individuals enlisting in the NOAA commissioned officer corps. Under the bill, any officer who fails to meet those requirements would be obligated to repay NOAA an amount equal to the costs incurred to train that officer. Based on information provided by NOAA regarding the cost of such training, CBO estimates that the total amount of payments to NOAA from officers who fail to meet their service obligations would be minimal.

S. 2388 also would make it illegal for any individual to wear the uniform of the NOAA commissioned officer corps without proper authorization. Violators would be subject to criminal penalties; however, CBO estimates that any amounts collected would be minimal and would be offset by associated direct spending.

Finally, the bill would authorize NOAA to pay certain expenses related to higher education for individuals serving in the commissioned officer corps or individuals who commit to serving in the corps after completing a college degree. Based on information provided by the agency about the number of officers who would receive such assistance, CBO estimates that implementing this provision would cost less than \$500,000 a year, assuming the availability of appropriated funds.

The bill would impose intergovernmental and private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA). The bill would increase the costs of complying with existing mandates related to protections for personnel in the NOAA commissioned officer corps. It would impose an additional intergovernmental mandate by preempting state and local laws relating to jury exemptions. CBO estimates that the aggregate cost of complying with the mandates would fall below the annual thresholds established in UMRA for intergovernmental and private-sector mandates (\$73 million and \$146 million in 2012, respectively, adjusted annually for inflation).

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Jeff LaFave (for federal costs), J' nell Blanco (for the intergovernmental impact), and Amy Petz (for the impact on the private sector). The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.