CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

January 26, 2018

H.R. 3851
War Crimes Rewards Expansion Act

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on December 14, 2017

H.R. 3851 would explicitly authorize the Department of State to offer awards under its War Crimes Rewards Program for crimes that would be prosecuted under the laws and statutes of the United States and other countries. Currently, under that program, the department uses appropriated funds to offer cash awards of up to $5 million for information leading to the arrest or conviction of designated individuals accused by international tribunals of committing war crimes, genocide, or crimes against humanity.

Under current law, whether the department has the authority to designate individuals who have not been charged by an international tribunal is unclear. (The department did not provide clarification.) To the extent that the bill would allow the department to designate more individuals, implementing H.R. 3851 could increase spending subject to appropriation. However, CBO has no basis for estimating whether implementing that provision would have discretionary costs because we cannot determine whether the department would offer additional awards under this authority, or how many, or when such awards might be paid.

Enacting H.R. 3851 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 3851 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2028.

H.R. 3851 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Sunita D'Monte. The estimate was approved by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.