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Replacing Military Personnel in Some Support Positions With Federal Civilians

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The Potential to Expand the Role of the Department of Defense's (DoD's) Civilian Employees

Transferring to civilians certain jobs currently held by military personnel could reduce costs and increase DoD's focus on warfighting.

Doing so would not lead DoD into uncharted waters because it has previous experience with such transfers.

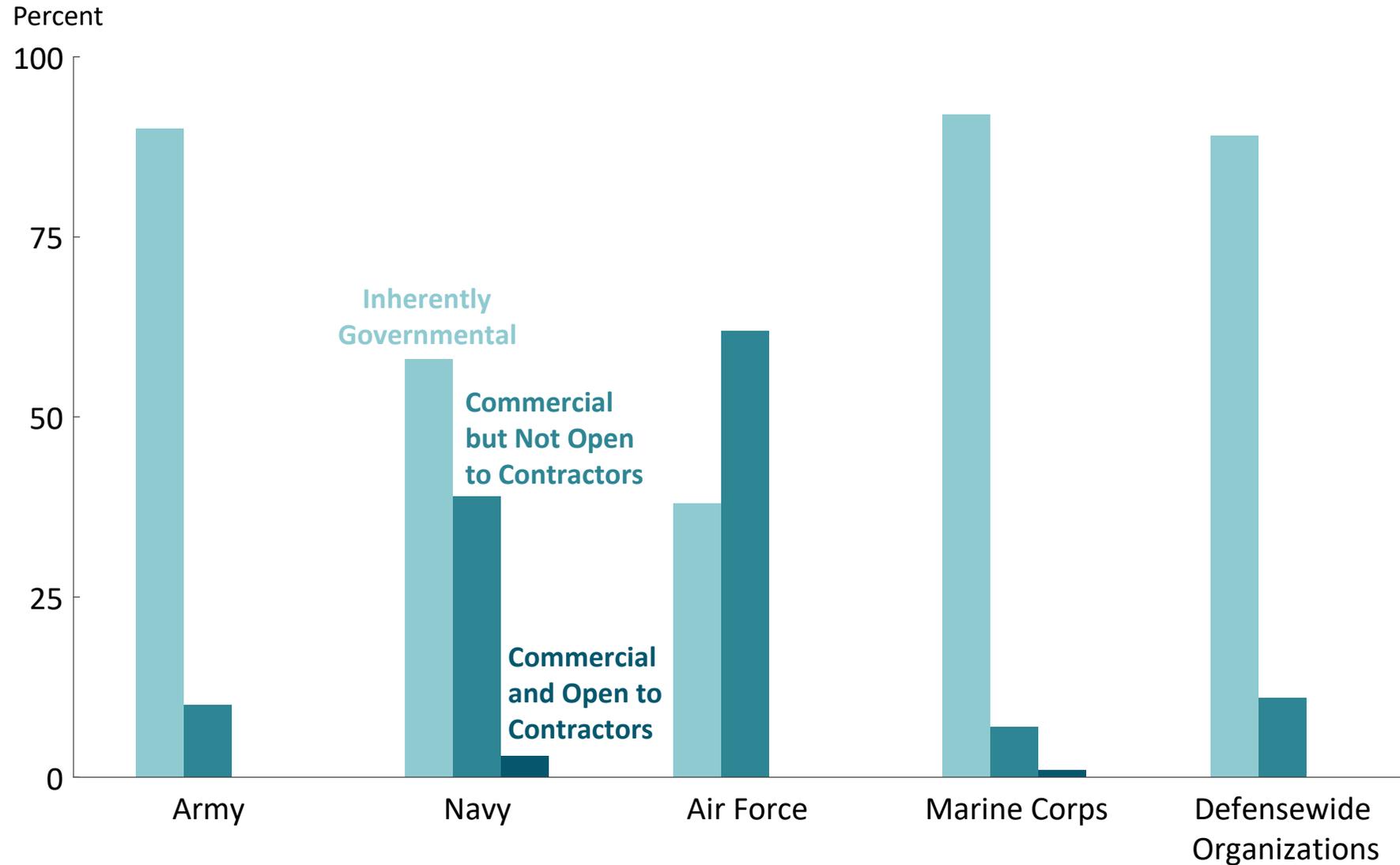
For this analysis, the Congressional Budget Office used DoD's Inherently Governmental and Commercial Activities (IGCA) database for 2012 to identify the number and types of positions that it might make sense to transfer.

CBO also estimated possible savings for DoD and the federal government if DoD reduced military end strength by the number of such positions transferred.

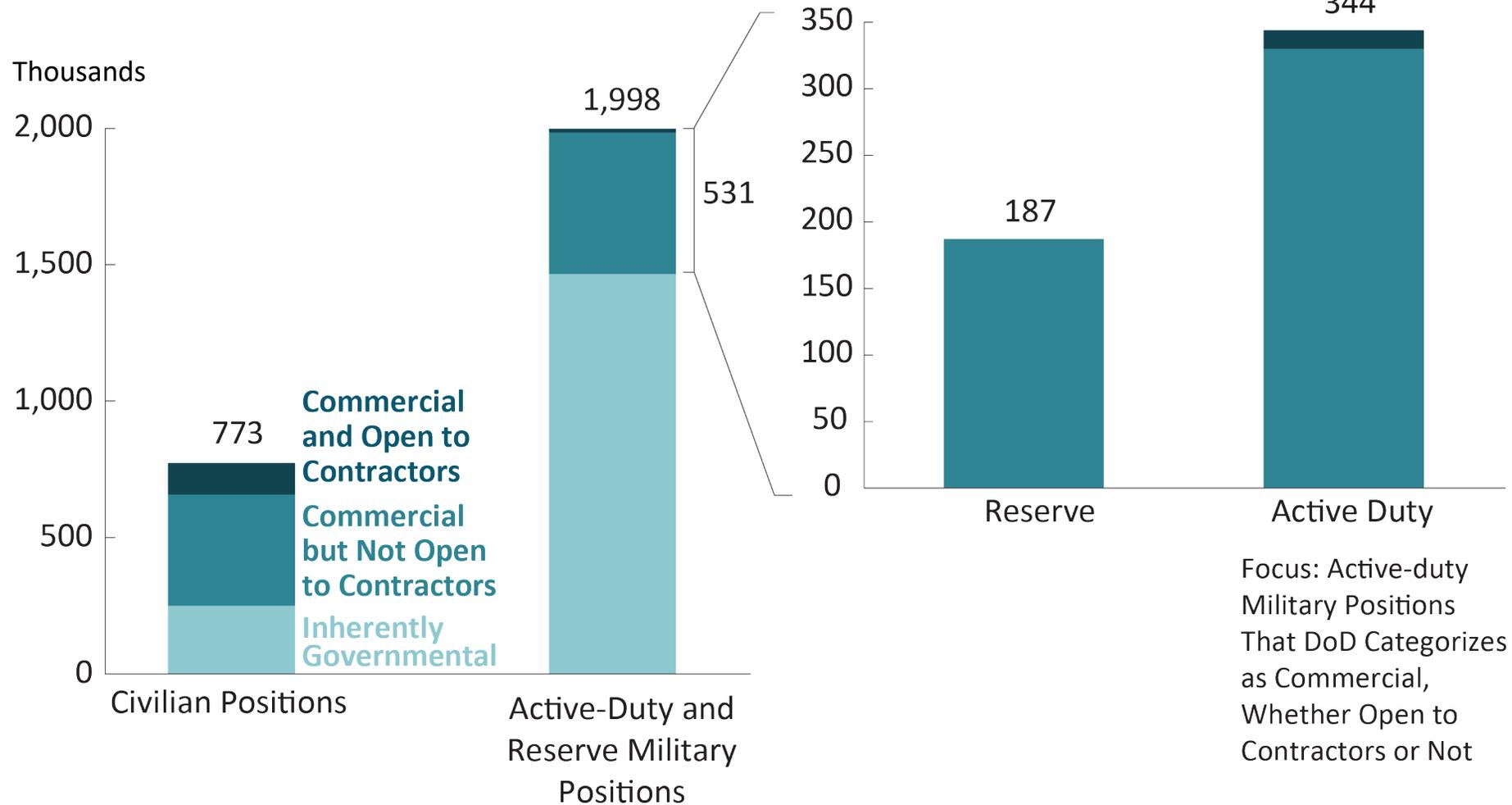
Two main job categories exist in the IGCA database:

- Inherently governmental jobs, which only government employees (military or civilian) can perform; those account for 62 percent of all jobs in the database.
- Commercial jobs that use skills or provide services available in the private sector; those account for 38 percent of all jobs in the database.

Military Positions in the Services and Defensewide Organizations, by Function, 2012



Military and Civilian Positions in the DoD, by Function, 2012

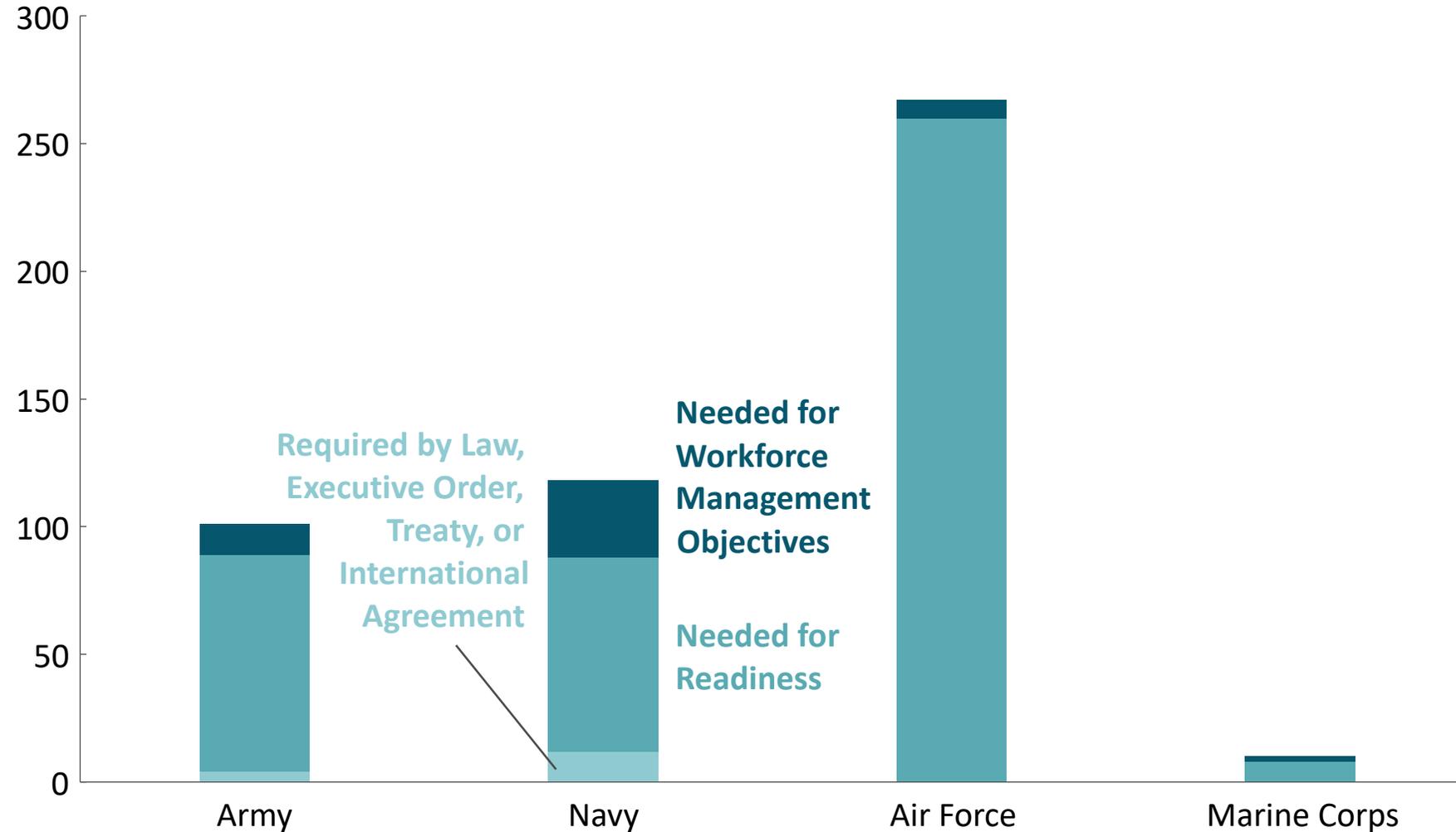


For many reasons, the services place military personnel in commercial jobs, which they implement in different ways. Those reasons include:

- Meeting readiness objectives
- Achieving workforce management goals
- Complying with laws, executive orders, treaties, or international agreements

Military Positions in Commercial Functions Not Open to Contractors, by Reason, 2012

Thousands



Estimating the Number of Positions That Could Be Transferred to Civilians

Accepting the existing classification of positions as inherently governmental or commercial, CBO's analysis instead addresses how to achieve a less costly blend of military personnel and civilians.

To answer that question, the analysis focuses on occupations in nondeployable units in which the services use different mixes of military personnel and civilians.

CBO estimates that, if all services used the same mix of the service branch with the smallest percentage of military personnel, about 80,000 active-duty positions could be available for transfer.

CBO considered three options for transferring 80,000 positions to civilian employees:

- One civilian replaces one service member (1:1 ratio)
- Four civilians replace every five service members (1:1.25 ratio)
- Two civilians replace every three service members (1:1.5 ratio)

Scenarios for Civilians Replacing 80,000 Military Personnel

Thousands of Positions

Service	Existing Commercial Positions Transferable to Civilians	Replacement Ratio (Civilian:Military)		
		1:1	1:1.25	1:1.5
Army	14.0	14.0	11.2	9.3
Navy	36.0	36.0	28.8	24.0
Air Force	24.0	24.0	19.2	16.0
Marine Corps	6.0	6.0	4.8	4.0
Total	80.0	80.0	64.0	53.3

Estimating the Savings From Transferring the Positions to Civilians

The cost analysis compares all current and future costs of hiring a service member to those of hiring a civilian.

Because some of those costs are borne by agencies other than DoD, CBO calculates the cost to the federal government, including revenue effects.

The ratio at which civilians replace military personnel is a key factor determining total savings.

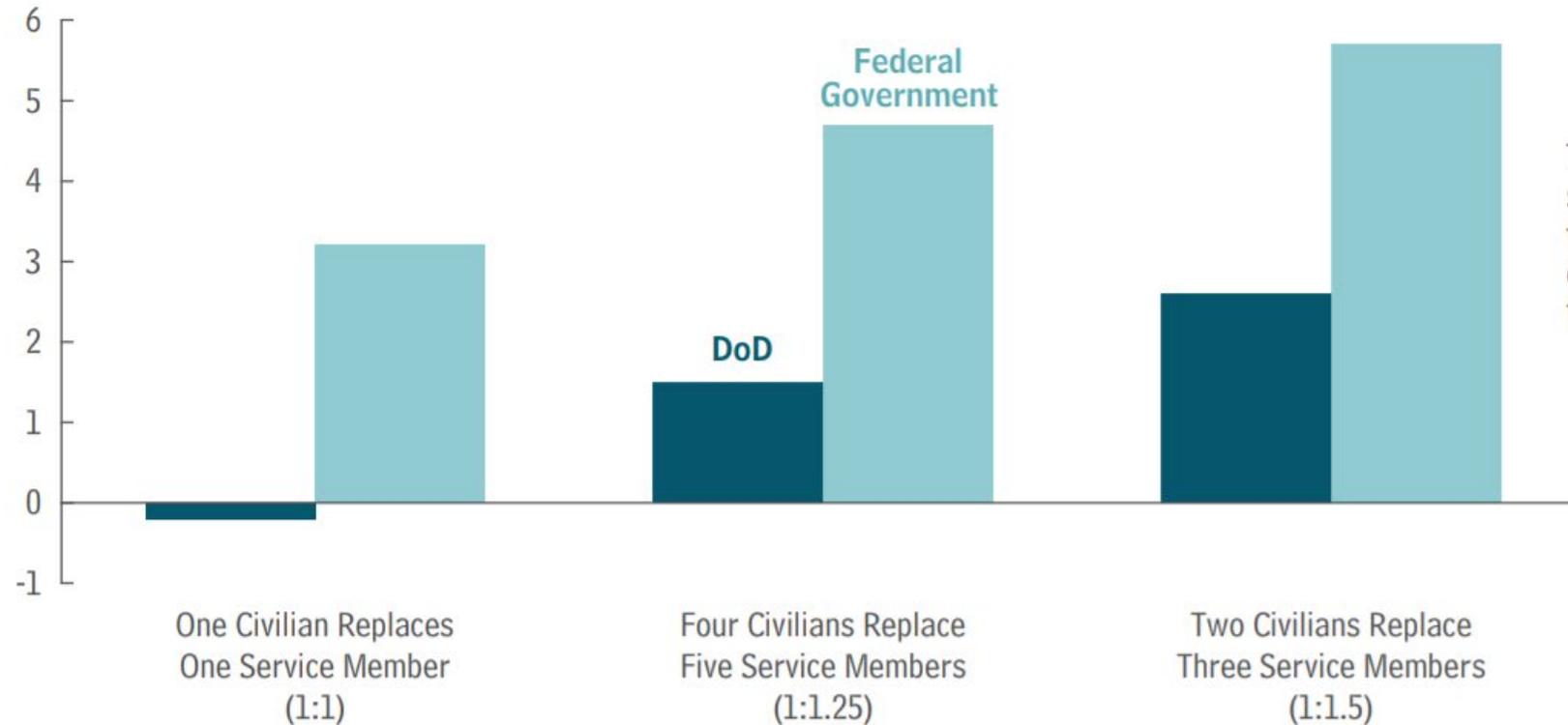
Average Annualized Cost, by Department, of Employing a Service Member and a Federal Civilian in Comparable Occupations

2014 Dollars

Department and Cost Category	Military	Civilian	Military– Civilian Difference
Department of Defense	103,400	106,100	-2,700
Department of Veterans Affairs	34,000	n.a.	34,000
Department of the Treasury	5,000	n.a.	5,000
Office of Personnel Management	n.a.	4,000	-4,000
Department of Education	300	*	300
Total Federal Government Spending	142,700	110,100	32,600
Tax Revenues From Basic Pay and Special, Incentive, and Other Pay	-7,500	-14,100	6,600
Net Cost to the Federal Government	135,200	96,000	39,200

Estimated Long-Run Annualized Savings From Transferring 80,000 Military Support Positions to Civilians

Billions of 2014 Dollars



The federal government's savings are larger than those for DoD alone because some of those savings would accrue to other agencies.

Other Considerations

Civilians have advantages beyond lower costs, such as greater stability or familiarity with technological advances for which military personnel would require additional training.

However, there are disadvantages to shedding military positions.

Achieving the savings would depend on cutting military end strength—an action that would reduce DoD's ability to surge troops in a protracted conflict.

Also, reducing commercial positions could have adverse effects on the services' workforce management goals or unique needs.