

H.R. 4771, VA Tele-Hearing Modernization Act

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on October 29, 2019

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2020	2020-2024	2020-2029
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	*	*
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No	Mandate Effects	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2030?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No
* = between zero and \$500,000.			

Under current law, veterans who apply for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) may appeal a decision on that application to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA), a VA organization that reviews claims decisions. Veterans who appeal may request a hearing at BVA and may attend the hearing in person at the BVA headquarters in Washington, D.C., or by video teleconference from a VA regional office.

H.R. 4771 would allow veterans who request an appeal hearing with BVA to attend from any location using video and audio technology on a secure Internet platform that would be developed by VA. The bill also would require VA to provide a report to the Congress on its implementation of the requirement to facilitate such tele-hearings.

The department believes it can enable tele-hearings at locations other than VA regional offices under current law, and it has begun doing so on a trial basis. The department expects to permit all veterans who request a BVA hearing to appear remotely by the beginning of calendar year 2020. As a result, CBO does not expect that implementing H.R. 4771 would increase the cost to develop the tele-hearing platform. The bill's additional reporting requirements would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2020-2024 period, subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Logan Smith. The estimate was reviewed by Leo Lex, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.