

S. 332, A bill to require the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress a report on repealing the manifestation periods for presumptions of service connection for chloracne and porphyria cutanea tarda associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents, and for other purposes

As reported by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on September 15, 2020

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2020	2020-2025	2020-2030
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	0	1	not estimated
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 2031?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

S. 332 would require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to report to the Congress on how the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) handles claims for disability compensation from veterans of the Vietnam War who have chloracne, porphyria cutanea tarda, or subacute peripheral neuropathy.

Under current law, veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange, a blend of herbicides used by the Department of Defense to remove dense tropical foliage. Generally, VA compensates veterans who have disabilities or diseases that have been determined to be connected to their military service based on military medical records and physical examinations. However, VA presumes certain diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's disease, prostate cancer, and the three conditions listed in the bill are a result of exposure to Agent Orange. Unlike other conditions that are presumed to be associated with Agent Orange, the three listed conditions must manifest within one year of exposure to Agent Orange at certain severity levels to be considered service-connected.

The bill would require that the report include the expected effect of eliminating the manifestation period for the diseases for the purposes of eligibility for disability compensation. It also would provide recommendations on how VA can better adjudicate benefit claims associated with the diseases. VA would be required to implement any recommendations made by GAO. CBO cannot anticipate what recommendations GAO would make and thus cannot estimate the cost of complying with the requirement to implement them. Based on the cost of similar studies, CBO estimates the report would cost \$1 million to complete. Such spending would be 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 Director of Budget Analysis.