

H.R. 4673, Ensuring Veterans' Smooth Transition Act

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on July 28, 2021

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2022	2022-2026	2022-2031
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	38	3,060	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 2032?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

H.R. 4673 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to automatically enroll eligible veterans in the department's patient enrollment system for VA health care benefits and services. That requirement would only apply to veterans who leave the armed forces after enactment. The bill also would require VA to provide veterans with an electronic mechanism for disenrolling from the VA health care system.

CBO expects that most newly separated and eligible veterans will enroll in VA health care under current law. Using data from VA, CBO estimates that under the bill about 58,000 additional veterans would be automatically enrolled in 2022, and a similar number of veterans would be enrolled in each subsequent year. After accounting for the voluntary disenrollment of some veterans, CBO estimates that about 250,000 of those who would be automatically enrolled would remain enrolled by 2026. Accounting for a gradual increase in the use of VA health care by automatically enrolled veterans, CBO estimates that those veterans would receive care that costs on average \$3,900 each year. In total, implementing that requirement would cost \$3.1 billion over the 2022-2026 period. Such spending would be subject to the appropriation of the estimated amounts.

The bill also would require VA to provide veterans with digital certificates of enrollment and an electronic method to opt out of the system. Using costs for similar information technology efforts, CBO estimates that satisfying those requirements would cost \$2 million over the 2022-2026 period. Such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.



The costs of the legislation, detailed in Table 1, fall within budget function 700 (veterans benefits and services).

Table 1.
Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under H.R. 4673

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars					2022-2026
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Health Care (Auto-enroll)						
Estimated Authorization	42	130	411	960	1,745	3,288
Estimated Outlays	37	119	376	889	1,637	3,058
System Requirements						
Estimated Authorization	1	*	*	*	*	2
Estimated Outlays	1	*	*	*	*	2
Total Changes						
Estimated Authorization	43	130	411	960	1,746	3,290
Estimated Outlays	38	119	376	889	1,638	3,060

Components may not sum to totals because of rounding. * = between zero and \$500,000.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Etaf Khan. The estimate was reviewed by Leo Lex, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.