

## H.R. 1530, Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2023

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on April 28, 2023

| By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars  | 2023 | 2023-2028                                 | 2023-2033     |
|--|------|---|---------------|
| Direct Spending (Outlays)  | 0    | 0   | 0             |
| Revenues   | 0    | 0   | 0             |
| Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit  | 0    | 0   | 0             |
| Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)  | *    | 6   | not estimated |
| Increases <i>net direct spending</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2034? | No   | Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply? | No            |
|  |      | <b>Mandate Effects</b>                    |               |
| Increases <i>on-budget deficits</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2034?  | No   | Contains intergovernmental mandate?       | No            |
|  |      | Contains private-sector mandate?          | No            |
| * = between zero and \$500,000.  |      |   |               |

H.R. 1530 would increase the number of judges on the Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims (CAVC), provide certain benefits to recent law school graduates hired by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA), expand internship opportunities at VA, and require several reports and studies. In total, those changes would cost \$6 million over the 2023-2028 period. Such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

The CAVC has jurisdiction over appeals relating to veterans' benefits when veterans believe that VA's final decisions are incorrect. Under current law, the court is authorized to have up to seven permanent judges; it has temporary authority for two additional judges through the end of 2025. Section 7 would permanently authorize the court to seat up to nine judges, an increase of two judges, beginning in 2026. Using information on salaries for federal judges and their supporting staff, CBO estimates that adding two additional judges to the CAVC on a permanent basis would cost \$6 million over the 2023-2028 period.

In addition, the bill would require VA to establish a program to reimburse the costs of state bar exam preparation and annual bar dues for recent law graduates who commit to a three-year service agreement with the department. VA hires recent law school graduates on a temporary basis under programs that allow them to convert to permanent positions upon becoming fully licensed to practice law. Because VA has hired a small number of people

See also

[CBO's Cost Estimates Explained](#), [CBO Describes Its Cost-Estimating Process](#), [Glossary](#)



under those programs in recent years, CBO estimates that reimbursing employees for bar preparation courses and annual bar dues would increase costs by less than \$500,000 over the 2023-2028 period.

Several other sections of the bill would require VA to submit reports and studies to the Congress and to provide additional information to veterans and their representatives. Based on the costs of similar activities, CBO estimates that satisfying those requirements would increase costs by insignificant amounts.

The bill also would require VA to establish an internship program for first-year and second-year law students, and to help recent law school graduates repay their student loans. The department is satisfying both of those requirements under current law, thus implementing those provisions would not affect the federal budget.

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. 1530**

|                         | By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars |      |      |      |      |      | 2023-2028 |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|
|                         | 2023                                | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 |           |
| Estimated Authorization | *                                   | *    | *    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 6         |
| Estimated Outlays       | *                                   | *    | *    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 6         |

\* = between zero and \$500,000.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Logan Smith. The estimate was reviewed by Chad Chirico, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

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