

S. 1528, Disaster Assistance Simplification Act

As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs on May 17, 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)	*	36	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
		Mandate Effects	
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.			

S. 1528 would require the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to improve its website, DisasterAssistance.gov, which provides information for individuals, households, and businesses seeking access to federal disaster assistance. Many federal agencies provide information on the portal about the assistance that is available, but the website only allows applicants to apply for one FEMA program and has limited capacity for information sharing among participating agencies.

S. 1528 would require FEMA to streamline the application process by allowing individuals and businesses to apply for all available disaster assistance and to facilitate the sharing of applicant information among participating agencies. Under the bill, the portal would need to meet certain functionality requirements, such as protecting data privacy and facilitating agencies' ability to detect fraud and discrimination in the administration of assistance programs.

In 2022, FEMA allocated about \$11 million for the website, mostly for contracts with private vendors to operate the portal and supporting systems.

See also

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



Using information from FEMA about the portal’s current functionality, CBO expects that the agency would need to contract for additional technology services to develop new user interfaces and information sharing mechanisms and to enhance the website’s capacity to manage, store, and secure data. CBO estimates those costs would total \$34 million over the 2023-2028 period, with most of that cost occurring in 2025 and 2026. In addition, we estimate that FEMA would need \$2 million over that period for the equivalent of three fulltime employees—at an average annual cost of \$160,000—over the first three years after enactment, and two employees beginning in 2027, to oversee contractors and coordinate work on the portal among participating agencies. In total, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost \$36 million over the 2023-2028 period; any spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

The costs of the legislation, detailed in Table 1, fall within budget function 450 (community and regional development).

Table 1.
Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under S. 1528

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars						2023-2028
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	
Estimated Authorization	*	4	12	13	4	4	37
Estimated Outlays	*	4	11	12	5	4	36

* = between zero and \$500,000.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate Jon Sperl. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

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