

At a Glance

S. 546, Recruit and Retain Act

As reported by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on June 8, 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)	0	25	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

The bill would

- Increase the percentage of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants that can be used for administrative activities
- Expand the COPS program by creating new competitive grants to local law enforcement agencies to improve recruitment and assist with hiring new officers
- Require the Department of Justice to create new guidance for understaffed law enforcement agencies to obtain COPS grants
- Require the Government Accountability Office to report on recruitment practices and attrition rates across law enforcement agencies

Estimated budgetary effects would mainly stem from

- Increasing the federal share of COPS grants to cover administrative expenses
- Authorization of appropriations for new grant programs
- Administrative costs to issue grants guidance and complete the report

Detailed estimate begins on the next page.

See also

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

Bill Summary

S. 546 would expand the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program by creating new grants to assist hiring by law enforcement agencies experiencing application declines and to encourage law enforcement agencies to partner with schools to improve recruitment. The bill also would increase the percentage of COPS grants funds that can be used for administrative purposes and require additional reporting by the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

Estimated Federal Cost

The estimated budgetary effect of S. 546 is shown in Table 1. The costs of the legislation fall within budget function 750 (administration of justice).

Table 1. Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under S. 546							
	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars						2023-2028
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	
Estimated Authorization	0	8	8	8	8	8	40
Estimated Outlays	0	1	3	6	7	8	25

Basis of Estimate

CBO assumes that the bill will be enacted late in fiscal year 2023. Most underlying authorizations for the COPS program expired in 2009. The Congress has continued to provide funding for the program including an appropriation of \$663 million in 2023. CBO is estimating the cost of whatever amounts are necessary to cover the costs of implementing the new activities specified in the bill and not the cost of reauthorizing the COPS program.

CBO estimates that S. 546 would authorize the appropriation of \$40 million over the 2024-2028 period for those new activities. Subject to the availability of appropriated funds, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost \$25 million over the same period.

Administrative Expenses

S. 546 would amend the COPS program to allow a local law enforcement agency that is awarded a COPS grant for hiring or rehiring officers to use 2 percent of the funds to cover administrative expenses associated with the grant. Under current law, COPS grants can be used to cover up to 75 percent of the cost of hiring an officer—the remaining cost is paid by the local agency. CBO estimates that allowing 2 percent of each grant to be used to cover administrative costs would increase federal costs because some of what localities spend on administrative costs would now be covered by the federal grant. In 2023, the Department of Justice (DOJ) allocated \$225 million to COPS grants that support hiring or rehiring officers.

Accounting for anticipated inflation, CBO estimates that this provision would cost \$14 million over the 2024-2028 period.

Pipeline Partnership Program

The bill would create a new competitive grant program for law enforcement agencies that partner with schools or universities for recruiting to support outreach and engagement activities. The bill would set aside \$3 million each year from appropriated funds for the program. Based on historical spending patterns for similar activities, CBO estimates that the program would cost \$11 million over the 2024-2028 period.

Grants to Reduce Application Fees

S. 546 would allow competitive grants to local law enforcement agencies to reduce application fees for recruits, including background checks, tests, and certifications. To be eligible, an agency must experience reductions in the volume of officer applications. Using information from DOJ on grant awards in recent years and the average application fee for recruits, CBO estimates that the program would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2024-2028 period.

Grants Guidance and Reporting Requirement

S. 546 would require DOJ to create new procedures and guidance for understaffed law enforcement agencies to obtain COPS grants. The bill also would require GAO to report to the Congress on recruitment practices and attrition rates across law enforcement agencies. Based on the costs of similar activities, CBO estimates that these provisions would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2024-2028 period.

Pay-As-You-Go Considerations: None.

Increase in Long-Term Net Direct Spending and Deficits: None.

Mandates: None.

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