Congressional Budget Office
Cost Estimate

July 31, 2025

S. 161, She DRIVES Act

As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on February 5, 2025

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2025	2025-2030	2025-2035
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	14	not estimated

Increases *net direct spending* in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036?	No	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 2036?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	Yes, Under Threshold

* = between zero and $500,000.

S. 161 would require the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to conduct additional crash tests for motor vehicles using devices that represent female drivers. The agency does not currently use such devices for all test types. The bill also would require NHTSA to issue rules requiring the use of newer, more advanced crash test devices by both the agency and vehicle manufacturers. Finally, S. 161 would require NHTSA to report to the Congress twice on its plans to incorporate additional advanced crash test devices—once within a year of enactment and again in 2031.

Based on information from the agency, CBO expects that NHTSA would spend about $3 million annually, beginning in 2027, for additional test vehicles and about $500,000 annually for additional staff and equipment. On that basis, and accounting for anticipated inflation, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost $14 million over the 2025-2030 period. CBO expects the bill's rulemaking requirements would largely codify NHTSA's planned rulemaking processes and would have an insignificant cost. Based on the costs of similar activities, CBO estimates that the two reports would cost less than $500,000. Any increase in spending to implement the bill would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

The costs of the legislation, detailed in Table 1, fall within budget function 400 (transportation).

Table 1.
Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under S. 161

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars						
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2025-2030
Estimated Authorization	*	*	2	4	4	4	14
Estimated Outlays	*	*	2	4	4	4	14

* = between zero and $500,000.

S. 161 would impose private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) by requiring vehicle manufacturers to use advanced crash test devices and to conduct additional tests using devices that represent females in the driver's seat.

The cost of compliance for manufacturers would stem from two, one-time expenditures as manufacturers replace their inventories of testing devices. Based on information from the automotive industry, CBO estimates that each device would cost about $1 million. Because manufacturers own some of the devices required for front-impact testing, CBO estimates the cost to replace existing testing devices with advanced devices would total between $50 million and $60 million. When standards for side-impact testing devices are finalized, we estimate the cost to replace existing side impact testing devices would be between $150 million and $160 million. CBO estimates that the cost of additional testing would incrementally increase the annual cost of testing by a small amount. Because those costs would occur over multiple years, CBO estimates that the total cost of the mandates in a single year would fall below the threshold established in UMRA for private-sector mandates ($206 million in 2025, adjusted annually for inflation).

The bill would not impose intergovernmental mandates as defined in UMRA.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Willow Latham-Proença (for federal costs) and Lucy Marret (for mandates). The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

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