

At a Glance

S. 831, Representing VA with Accuracy Act

As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on July 30, 2025

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2026	2026-2030	2026-2035
Direct Spending (Outlays)	3	12	27
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	3	12	27
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	12	41	76

Increases <i>net direct spending</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036? < \$2.5 billion	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	Yes
	Mandate Effects	
Increases <i>on-budget deficits</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036? < \$5 billion	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
	Contains private-sector mandate?	No

The bill would

- Require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish two new call centers
- Require VA to make changes to its telephone systems

Estimated budgetary effects would mainly stem from

- Establishing additional call centers
- Implementing changes to VA's telephone systems

Detailed estimate begins on the next page.

See also

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

Bill Summary

S. 831 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish two new call centers. The bill also would require VA to make changes to its telephone systems.

Estimated Federal Cost

The estimated budgetary effects of S. 831 are shown in Table 1. The costs of the legislation fall within budget function 700 (veterans benefits and services).

Table 1. Estimated Budgetary Effects of S. 831												
By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars											2026- 2030	2026- 2035
	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035		
Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation												
Estimated Authorization	14	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	41	76
Estimated Outlays	12	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	41	76
Increases in Direct Spending												
Estimated Budget Authority	4	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	12	27
Estimated Outlays	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	12	27

Basis of Estimate

For this estimate, CBO assumes S. 831 will be enacted near the beginning of fiscal year 2026 and that outlays will follow historical patterns for affected programs.

Provisions that Affect Spending Subject to Appropriation and Direct Spending

Establishing two new call centers and updating VA telephone systems would cost \$103 million over the 2026-2035 period, CBO estimates. Spending subject to appropriation would increase by \$76 million and direct spending would increase by \$27 million over the 2026-2035 period.

Those provisions would affect spending subject to appropriation as well as direct spending because CBO expects that some of the costs would be paid from the Toxic Exposures Fund (TEF) established by Public Law 117-168, the Honoring our PACT Act. The TEF is a mandatory appropriation that VA uses to pay for health care, disability claims processing, medical research, and information technology modernization that benefit veterans who were exposed to environmental hazards. Additional spending from the TEF would occur if legislation increases the costs of similar activities that benefit veterans with such exposure. Thus, in addition to increasing spending subject to appropriation, enacting the bill would increase amounts paid from the TEF, which are classified as direct spending.



CBO projects that the proportion of costs paid by the TEF will grow over time based on the amount of formerly discretionary appropriations that CBO expects will be provided through the mandatory appropriation as specified in the Honoring our PACT Act.¹

Call Centers. S. 831 would require VA to have a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) call center located in each of six U.S. time zones listed in the bill. Beneficiaries can contact VHA call centers to schedule appointments, request prescription refills, and receive certain urgent care services. There are currently 22 VHA call centers across the United States, but none are located in the Alaska or Hawaii time zones, two of the six time zones enumerated in the bill. CBO estimates that establishing a call center in those time zones would cost \$94 million over the 2026-2035 period. Of that amount, \$69 million would be spending subject to appropriation and \$25 million would be direct spending.

On the basis of information about call center and real estate costs, CBO estimates that it would cost \$1 million to configure and equip a call center in Alaska and \$140,000 per year for rent. The call center would require 30 full-time-equivalent positions (FTEs), CBO estimates. Annual compensation, benefits, and software license costs would average \$120,000 per FTE. In total, establishing a VHA call center in Alaska would cost \$39 million over the 2026-2035 period.

CBO estimates that VA would spend \$2 million to configure and equip a call center in Hawaii and \$330,000 per year for rent. That facility would require 45 FTEs, and annual compensation, benefits, and software license costs would average \$110,000 per FTE. In total, establishing a VHA call center in Hawaii would cost \$55 million over the 2026-2035 period, CBO estimates.

Telephone Systems. The bill would require VA to change its telephone systems to make all outgoing calls come from a single telephone number and to use caller identification that indicates that the calls are from VA. Using information from the department about the cost of those changes, CBO estimates that implementing the requirement would cost \$9 million over the 2026-2035 period. Of that amount, \$7 million would be spending subject to appropriation and \$2 million would be direct spending.

Spending Subject to Appropriation

As discussed under “Provisions that Affect Spending Subject to Appropriation and Direct Spending,” implementing the bill would increase discretionary costs by \$76 million over the 2026-2035 period. Such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds (see Table 2).

1. For additional information about estimated spending from the TEF, see Congressional Budget Office, “Toxic Exposures Fund—January 2025 Baseline” (January 2025), <https://tinyurl.com/3xjr6d3h>.



Table 2.
Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under S. 831

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars										2026-2030	2026-2035
	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035		
Call Centers												
Estimated Authorization	8	6	7	7	7	7	6	7	7	7	35	69
Estimated Outlays	8	6	7	7	7	7	6	7	7	7	35	69
Telephone Systems												
Estimated Authorization	6	*	*	*	*	*	1	*	*	*	6	7
Estimated Outlays	4	2	*	*	*	*	1	*	*	*	6	7
Total Changes												
Estimated Authorization	14	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	41	76
Estimated Outlays	12	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	41	76

* = between zero and \$500,000.

Direct Spending

As discussed under “Provisions that Affect Spending Subject to Appropriation and Direct Spending,” enacting the bill would increase direct spending from the TEF by \$27 million over the 2026-2035 period (see Table 3).

Table 3.
Estimated Increases in Direct Spending Under S. 831

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars										2026-2030	2026-2035
	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035		
Call Centers												
Estimated Budget Authority	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	10	25
Estimated Outlays	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	10	25
Telephone Systems												
Estimated Budget Authority	2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	2
Estimated Outlays	1	1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	2
Total Changes												
Estimated Budget Authority	4	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	12	27
Estimated Outlays	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	12	27

* = between zero and \$500,000.

Pay-As-You-Go Considerations

The Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 establishes budget-reporting and enforcement procedures for legislation affecting direct spending or revenues. The net changes in outlays that are subject to those pay-as-you-go procedures are shown in Table 3.

Increase in Long-Term Net Direct Spending and Deficits

CBO estimates that enacting S. 831 would not increase net direct spending by more than \$2.5 billion in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036.

CBO estimates that enacting S. 831 would not increase on-budget deficits by more than \$5 billion in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036.

Mandates

The bill contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

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