



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

September 22, 2017

H.R. 390 **Iraq and Syria Genocide Emergency Relief** **and Accountability Act of 2017**

*As reported by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
on September 19, 2017*

H.R. 390 would authorize the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to support entities that are assisting threatened members of minority groups in Iraq or Syria and entities that are seeking legal accountability for certain crimes in those countries.

The department and USAID currently provide humanitarian and other assistance in Iraq and Syria that would partially meet the objectives of the act. According to the department, that assistance generally totals between \$5 million to \$10 million a year (some assistance is provided annually while other assistance is one-time or provided over several years).

Based on information from the Administration, CBO expects that small amounts of additional assistance would be provided under H.R. 390. Such assistance would build the capacity of entities that collect and preserve evidence or that investigate, prosecute, or adjudicate genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The funds also would assist entities that would be identified as working with persecuted and at-risk minority groups. Based on spending for similar programs, CBO estimates that providing additional assistance authorized under the act and administering that assistance would require additional appropriations of \$2 million to \$3 million a year. CBO estimates that implementing those provisions would cost \$6 million over the 2018-2022 period (the remainder would be spent after 2022).

H.R. 390 would expand the War Crimes Rewards Program to include crimes committed in Syria. Under that program, the department uses appropriated funds to offer cash awards of up to \$5 million for information leading to the arrest or conviction of individuals accused of war crimes, genocide, or crimes against humanity. However, CBO has no basis for estimating whether implementing that provision would have discretionary costs because we cannot determine whether the department would offer awards under this authority, or how many, or when such awards might be paid.

Finally, H.R. 390 contains several provisions—primarily affecting reporting requirements, a feasibility study, and a working group for military and diplomatic strategy—that CBO estimates would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2018-2022 period; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Enacting H.R. 390 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply. CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 390 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2028.

H.R. 390 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

On May 1, 2017, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 390 as ordered reported by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on March 29, 2017. H.R. 390 as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations is similar to that version of the act. However, since our May estimate, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31) provided funding that would meet some of the objectives of the act; thus, CBO's estimate of the cost of implementing H.R. 390 is correspondingly lower.

On June 20, 2017, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for S. 905 as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on May 25, 2017. Some of the provisions in H.R. 390 are similar to those in S. 905 and CBO's estimate of their budgetary effects are the same.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Sunita D'Monte. The estimate was approved by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.