

H.R. 5843, Strengthening Oversight for Veterans Act of 2020

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on September 17, 2020

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2021	2021-2025	2021-2030
Direct Spending (Outlays)	*	*	*
Revenues	*	*	*
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	*	*	*
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	*	not estimated
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	Yes	Mandate Effects	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2031?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No
* = between -\$500,000 and \$500,000.			

H.R. 5843 would authorize the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to issue subpoenas to compel witnesses to participate in its investigations. The Inspector General would not be authorized to subpoena federal employees or witnesses in other criminal proceedings. Subpoenas would require the approval from the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, an independent federal entity. The Inspector General would be required to report to the Congress the number of subpoenas it issued.

According to information provided by VA and information about the number of times other agencies with similar authority have issued subpoenas, CBO expects the department would rarely use that subpoena authority. However, in any instances where a subpoena is issued and a person refuses to comply, civil and criminal penalties could apply. Therefore, the government might collect additional fines under the legislation. Civil fines are recorded in the budget as revenues. Criminal fines are also recorded as revenues, deposited in the Crime Victims Fund, and spent without appropriation. Because CBO expects that few people would be fined for defying subpoenas, we estimate that both revenues and direct spending would increase by insignificant amounts over the 2021-2030 period. On net, enacting the bill would reduce the deficit by an insignificant amount, CBO estimates.



Because CBO estimates that the subpoena authority granted by the bill would be rarely used, CBO estimates that administrative costs associated with issuing subpoenas would also be insignificant. Such spending would be subject to the authorization of appropriated funds.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Logan Smith. The estimate was reviewed by Leo Lex, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.