

At a Glance

H.R. 2429, VA Police Improvement and Accountability Act

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on May 4, 2021

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2021	2021-2026	2021-2031
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	130	not estimated
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 2032?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

* = between zero and \$500,000.

The bill would

- Require all Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) police officers use body-worn cameras while on duty
- Require VA to investigate, track, and report on incidents that involve the use of force by department police
- Require VA to publish on its website detailed statistics about incidents involving its police
- Require VA to report to the Congress on the bill's implementation

Estimated budgetary effects would mainly stem from

- Acquiring and maintaining body-worn cameras for all officers
- Hiring additional staff to review camera footage and use-of-force incidents
- Updating information technology systems to meet the bill's incident reporting requirements

Areas of significant uncertainty include

- Estimating the number of additional staff VA would need to implement the bill

Detailed estimate begins on the next page.

Bill Summary

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employs nearly 4,000 police officers at its 144 medical centers nationwide. H.R. 2429 would make several changes to the procedures governing VA's police force.

Estimated Federal Cost

The estimated budgetary effects of H.R. 2429 are shown in Table 1. The costs of the legislation fall within budget function 700 (veterans' benefits and services).

Table 1. Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under H.R. 2429							
	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars						2021-2026
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Body-Worn Cameras							
Estimated Authorization	*	18	21	25	25	26	115
Estimated Outlays	*	18	21	25	25	26	115
Investigations and Reports							
Estimated Authorization	*	3	3	3	3	3	15
Estimated Outlays	*	3	3	3	3	3	15
Total Changes							
Estimated Authorization	*	21	24	28	28	29	130
Estimated Outlays	*	21	24	28	28	29	130

* = between zero and \$500,000.

Basis of Estimate

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the estimated amounts will be appropriated each year and that outlays will follow historical spending patterns for affected programs. CBO assumes that the bill will be enacted in fiscal year 2021. Under those assumptions, VA could incur some costs in 2021, but CBO expects that most of the costs would be incurred in 2022 and later.

Spending Subject to Appropriation

CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost \$130 million over the 2021-2026 period; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Body-Worn Cameras. The bill would require VA to equip its 4,000 police officers with body-worn cameras that record and store audio and video; that requirement would take effect within 180 days of enactment. Using information from VA, CBO estimates that purchases of cameras—including spares and replacements—camera storage, maintenance, and data storage would cost \$2,800 per officer each year. Thus, CBO estimates that requiring the use

of body-worn cameras for all VA police officers would cost \$55 million over the 2021-2026 period.

CBO also expects that VA would need additional resources to review and process that camera footage. CBO estimates that VA would need the equivalent of one full-time employee for each of its 144 medical centers at an average annual compensation of \$95,000. Accounting for the time needed to hire and train new personnel, CBO estimates that those resources would cost \$58 million over the 2021-2026 period.

Finally, VA would require additional resources to train police officers to use body-worn cameras. Using information from the department, CBO estimates that training would cost \$2 million over the 2021-2026 period.

In total, satisfying the bill's requirement to equip all VA police officers with body-worn cameras would cost \$115 million over the 2021-2026 period.

Investigations and Reports. H.R. 2429 would require VA to improve and centralize its processes for collecting, analyzing, and reporting on data about the actions and operations of VA police officers. Under the bill, VA would be required to:

- Review and investigate each use-of-force incident involving its police officers;
- Track and analyze data on police incidents at each VA medical center; and
- Report to the Congress on the bill's implementation, on the staffing needs of the VA police force, and on the use of body-worn cameras.

Although VA reports use-of force incidents that result in bodily harm to VA headquarters, it does not otherwise investigate or report information about its police force in a centralized manner as the bill would require. CBO expects that VA would need additional resources to centrally investigate all use-of-force incidents. CBO estimates that VA would require the equivalent of 10 full-time employees to do so. Using information on the average compensation of other VA employees who conduct similar investigations, CBO estimates that they would receive annual compensation averaging \$160,000. Accounting for the time needed to hire and train new personnel and adjusting for inflation, CBO estimates that investigating and centrally reporting all incidents involving the use of force would cost \$9 million over the 2021-2029 period.

H.R. 2429 would require VA to develop and implement a departmental system to track and analyze data about incidents involving VA police at all medical centers. The information would include data on tickets, arrests, prosecutions, use-of-force incidents, complaints, investigations, and disciplinary actions. VA would be required to post summary statistics on the website of each medical center. Based on the cost of similar systems and information

from VA, CBO estimates that implementing the provision would cost \$1 million annually beginning in 2022 and would total \$5 million over the 2021-2026 period.

H.R. 2429 would require VA to report to the Congress on its implementation of the bill's requirements, on the department's staffing needs, and on its progress in deploying body-worn cameras. Based on the cost of similar requirements, CBO estimates that satisfying those provisions would cost \$1 million over the 2021-2026 period.

In total, the bill's investigation and reporting requirements would cost \$15 million over the 2021-2026 period, CBO estimates.

Uncertainty

The number of people required to satisfy the bill's requirements could be greater or less than CBO estimates and costs could differ.

Pay-As-You-Go Considerations: None.

Increase in Long-Term Deficits: None.

Mandates: None.

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