

H.R. 6036, VA Family Leave Act of 2020

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on March 12, 2020

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2020	2020-2025	2020-2030
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	0	0	0
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 2031?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

H.R. 6036 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide up to 12 weeks of paid parental leave to certain medical employees (such as physicians, dentists, podiatrists, and registered nurses). VA would be required to provide that benefit to eligible employees following the birth or adoption of a child or the initial placement of a foster child. Such leave would be available during the 12-month period beginning on the date of the child's birth or placement. That requirement would take effect at the start of fiscal year 2021.

Under current law, the department's medical employees can take up to 12 weeks of leave without pay after the birth or adoption of a child or the initial placement of a foster child. (Employees instead may use any paid annual or sick leave that they have accrued.) The leave authorized by this bill would be in addition to any leave already available to, or taken by, those employees during the 12-week period provided by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). CBO expects that employees who would be entitled to paid leave under H.R. 6036 would substitute that leave for annual or sick leave they otherwise would have taken during the 12-week FMLA leave period.

VA intends to use the discretion provided to the department under current law to provide paid parental leave to its medical employees beginning in fiscal year 2021, regardless of whether H.R. 6036 is enacted. CBO expects that providing those benefits will increase costs (as described below), but because the department's plan for providing such leave to its medical employees is the same as what would be required in the bill, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 6036 would not affect the federal budget.

Using projections of birth and adoption rates, the number of VA medical employees, and average salaries, CBO estimates that providing paid parental leave will cost the department \$270 million over the 2020-2025 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts.

In addition, CBO estimates that providing paid parental leave will increase balances of sick leave for medical employees who now would defer the use of some sick leave they otherwise would have taken for child care under current policy. Any additional sick leave carried through to retirement will be used in the computation of those employees' or survivors' annuities; increases in annuity payments are classified as direct spending. Because the effect on the payment of future retirement annuities will be small, CBO estimates the increase in direct spending would be less than \$500,000 over the 2020-2030 period.

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