

H.R. 2788, VA Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor Modernization 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)	1	26	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

Under current law, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is prohibited from employing more than 40 counselors to provide Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) counseling and dispute resolution services. H.R. 2788 would remove that limit.

Businesses, government agencies, and other entities are prohibited from discriminating against job applicants or employees based on the person's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or genetic information. EEO counselors at VA are responsible for reviewing complaints that may be related to such discrimination. Counselors support aggrieved parties and facilitate dispute resolution between affected parties, generally before formal complaints are filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a federal agency charged with enforcing federal laws that prohibit employment discrimination.

The current limit of 40 EEO counselors was set in 1997. Since then, VA's workforce has nearly doubled. As a result, CBO estimates that VA would hire 40 additional EEO counselors. Using salary information from VA, CBO estimates those counselors would be paid an average of \$131,000 annually. Accounting for gradual hiring, CBO estimates those counselors would cost \$26 million over the 2021-2026 period; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.



The costs of the legislation, detailed in Table 1, fall within budget function 700 (veterans' benefits and services).

Table 1.
Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under H.R. 2788

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars						2021-2026
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
EEO Counselors							
Estimated Authorization	1	4	5	5	5	6	26
Estimated Outlays	1	4	5	5	5	6	26

EEO = Equal Employment Opportunity

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