

**H.R. 1948, VA Employee Fairness Act of 2021**

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)	not estimated	not estimated	not estimated
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No	<b>Mandate Effects</b>	
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

H.R. 1948 would expand the conditions of employment that are subject to collective bargaining for certain employees of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Under current law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has broad authority to regulate the hours and conditions of employment for physicians, dentists, podiatrists, optometrists, chiropractors, registered nurses, physician assistants, and dental assistants employed by VHA. Those employees are prohibited from collectively bargaining over matters pertaining to professional conduct or competence, peer review, and compensation. The bill would remove those restrictions.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, the bill would allow about 110,000 employees to collectively bargain over forms of compensation such as awards, bonuses, overtime, and special scheduling arrangements. Compensation for VHA personnel is funded through annual appropriations; CBO estimates that about \$17 billion was provided in 2020 as compensation for the employees identified above. Some economic research indicates that that collective bargaining increases compensation. On that basis, CBO expects that implementing H.R. 1948 could increase VHA's personnel costs through higher bonuses, overtime pay, or special pay for employees in specialties that are high in demand, for example. However, CBO has no basis upon which to estimate the likelihood or potential magnitude of those effects.

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