



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE  
COST ESTIMATE**

October 20, 2005

**S. 1725  
Assure Emergency and Interoperable Communications for  
First Responders Act of 2005**

*As reported by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security  
and Governmental Affairs on September 29, 2005*

**SUMMARY**

S. 1725 would amend the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Act of 2004 to establish the Office for Emergency Communications, Interoperability, and Compatibility within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The office would be responsible for the coordination of all DHS efforts to achieve interoperable communications systems at the federal, state, and local level. The legislation also would authorize funds for communications research and emergency communications pilot projects, as well as grants to local first responders. In particular, the bill would authorize the appropriation of \$3.3 billion in first responder grants over the 2006-2010 period. In addition, S. 1725 would authorize a new program to protect the health and safety of disaster workers such as firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical technicians.

CBO estimates that implementing S. 1725 would cost \$71 million in 2006 and nearly \$2.4 billion over the 2006-2010 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. Enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues.

S. 1725 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA). State, local, and tribal governments would benefit from the authorization of \$3.3 billion over fiscal years 2006-2010 to improve communication systems for first responders.

## ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of S. 1725 is shown in the following table. The cost of this legislation falls within budget function 450 (community and regional development) and 800 (general government).

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	By Fiscal Year, In Millions of Dollars				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION</b>					
Research and Development Projects					
Estimated Authorization Level	127	127	126	125	127
Estimated Outlays	28	85	110	126	126
Grants for First Responders					
Authorization Level	400	500	600	800	1,000
Estimated Outlays	40	198	369	545	692
Disaster Area Protection					
Estimated Authorization Level	5	5	9	9	13
Estimated Outlays	3	5	7	9	11
Total Changes					
Estimated Authorization Level	532	632	735	934	1,140
Estimated Outlays	71	288	486	680	829

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## BASIS OF ESTIMATE

S. 1725 would establish an Office of Communications, Interoperability, and Compatibility, authorize appropriations for research and emergency communications pilot projects, authorize appropriations for grants for first responders, and authorize a program to protect the health and safety of disaster relief workers.

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the bill will be enacted this fall and that the specified and estimated authorization levels for implementing the bill will be appropriated for each year. Estimates of outlays are based on historical spending patterns for similar programs.

## **Office of Emergency Communications, Interoperability, and Compatibility**

Currently, DHS operates within its Science and Technology Directorate an Office for Interoperability and Compatibility that coordinates the department's activities regarding interoperable communications for public safety workers. According to the agency, under the bill, provisions relating to the new Office of Emergency Communications, Interoperability, and Compatibility would codify the department's existing policies and practices. Thus, CBO estimates that establishing the new office would not add significant costs.

## **Research and Development Projects**

S. 1725 would authorize DHS to conduct two emergency communication pilot projects involving interoperable communications throughout all levels of government. For those projects, the bill would authorize the appropriation of \$505 million over the 2006-2009 period and such sums as necessary for fiscal year 2010 and beyond. For this estimate, CBO assumes that the amounts authorized in 2010 would be equal to the 2009 level, adjusted for inflation. Assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that implementing the program would cost \$475 million over the 2006-2010 period.

## **Grants for First Responders**

S. 1725 would authorize DHS to provide grants to improve the interoperability of public safety communications among states and regions. The bill would authorize the appropriation of \$3.3 billion over the 2006-2010 period and such sums as necessary for fiscal year 2011 and beyond. Assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts and based on spending patterns of similar programs, CBO estimates that implementing the program would cost \$1.8 billion over the 2006-2010 period.

## **Disaster Area Protection**

S. 1725 would authorize a new program to protect the health and safety of disaster relief workers such as firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical technicians. Under the bill, federal agencies would be authorized to collect and analyze environmental data and conduct long-term epidemiological studies of the work environments of disaster relief workers. In addition, the legislation would authorize the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to prepare a report on health and environmental protection of disaster areas. Based on information from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and the NAS,

CBO estimates that implementing those provisions in S. 1725 would cost about \$35 million over the 2006-2010 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary funds.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT**

S. 1725 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA. State, local, and tribal governments would benefit from the authorization of \$3.3 billion over fiscal years 2006 through 2010 to improve communication systems for first responders.

## **PREVIOUS CBO ESTIMATES**

On April 22, 2005, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for S. 21, the Homeland Security Grant Enhancement Act of 2005, as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs on April 13, 2005. On May 6, 2005, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 1817, the Department of Homeland Security Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Homeland Security on April 27, 2005. On May 13, 2005, CBO transmitted cost estimates for H.R. 1817 as ordered reported by the House Committee on Energy and Commerce on May 11, 2005, and as ordered reported by the House Committee on the Judiciary on May 12, 2005. The three versions of H.R. 1817 are similar, and all three cost estimates are identical. The five pieces of legislation would authorize varying amounts of funds for interoperable communications. CBO's cost estimates for these bills reflect those differences.

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