



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE**

October 24, 1997

S. 623

Filipino Veterans Burial Benefits Act of 1997

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
on October 7, 1997*

Under S. 623, certain Filipino veterans of the Philippine Commonwealth Army during World War II (WWII) would receive new or increased burial and plot allowances if they are naturalized U.S. citizens living in the United States. Under current law, some of those Filipino veterans receive a total allowance of about \$225 or half the rate paid for U.S. veterans; the bill would increase the benefit to the full rate. It would also grant the full allowance of \$450 for certain Filipino veterans who do not now receive any benefit, if they meet the income and disability tests for veterans' pensions and are U.S. citizens living in the United States.

Information from the Department of Veterans Affairs indicates that about 80,000 surviving Filipino veterans of WWII served in units covered by the bill. According to data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), 20,000 Filipino veterans have become naturalized U.S. citizens since 1990, but INS does not know where those veterans reside. CBO has no information on the number or residence of the veterans who became citizens prior to 1990 and would be affected by this bill.

CBO estimates that the costs of S. 623 would be below \$500,000 annually. This estimate is based on projected mortality rates and two additional judgments, which indicate that the number of beneficiaries of this bill is likely to be small. First, most Filipino veterans who have become U.S. citizens since 1990 probably live in the Philippines because the Immigration Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-649) does not require them to reside in the United States and because individuals at their ages are unlikely to emigrate. (These veterans would have been at least in their mid-60s when they became citizens.) Second, based on census information, it is likely that many of the targeted veterans who reside in the United States do not meet the income or disability tests for benefits under the bill. Therefore, CBO expects that only a small percentage of the 80,000 veterans covered by the bill would be able to qualify for new or increased benefits.

Because this bill would affect direct spending, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply. S. 623 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Mary Helen Petrus. This estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.