

Calendar No. 207

106TH CONGRESS }
1st Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
106-107

NHTSA AUTHORIZATION INCREASE

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

ON

S. 1248



JULY 14, 1999.—Ordered to be printed

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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Mr. MCCAIN, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 1248]

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, to which was referred the bill (S. 1248) “A Bill to correct errors in the authorizations of certain programs administered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration”, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of the bill is to increase the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) authorization level for fiscal years 2000 and 2001 for the motor vehicle safety programs under Chapter 301 of title 49, United States Code, and the motor vehicle information programs under Part C of Subtitle VI of title 49, United States Code.

BACKGROUND AND NEEDS

NHTSA was established by the Highway Safety Act of 1970 (23 U.S.C. 401 note) to carry out a Congressional mandate to reduce the number of deaths, injuries, and economic losses resulting from automobile accidents on the Nation’s highways. The agency operates programs relating to the safety performance of motor vehicles and related equipment. It also provides leadership and technical assistance to States and local communities in their efforts to develop and implement effective highway safety programs.

During the 105th Congress, the Committee considered and favorably reported the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21; P.L. 105-178 as amended by P.L. 105-206). Part of TEA-21 reauthorized NHTSA setting the authorization levels for the

motor vehicle safety and the motor vehicle information programs for fiscal years 1999 through 2001. The Committee authorized these programs at the requested amounts of approximately \$81.2 million annually for motor vehicle safety programs and \$6.2 million annually for motor vehicle information programs, a total of \$87.4 million annually.

However, it was later discovered that the amounts requested were below the President's budget request. The President's budget increased funding for both programs to an annual total of \$99.8 million for fiscal years 1999 through 2001. Transportation Secretary Slater wrote to the Committee noting the error and requested an authorization increase to the level requested by the President. Chairman McCain and the ranking member, Senator Hollings, introduced legislation to increase the authorization to the requested amounts, but the Committee failed to take up the measure before the close of the 105th Congress.

During the 106th Congress, after receiving a letter from Chairman McCain about this matter, Secretary Slater renewed the administration's request for an increased authorization. This year the administration requested even more funding, seeking a total of \$116 million for motor vehicle safety programs and motor vehicle information programs.

In a subsequent letter to the Committee, Dr. Ricardo Martinez, NHTSA Administrator, warned that the agency would be unable to fully fund several important programs without the additional authorization. Primary among his concerns is an effort to bolster the agency's safety research programs. The increase will allow NHTSA to increase its study of crashes involving vehicles equipped with advanced air bag systems. NHTSA will also begin a comprehensive program to assess the injury risk of various side air bag designs to children and small adults seated out of position. Biomechanics research programs will also benefit as NHTSA develops a new family of crash test dummies to evaluate new injury potentials. Finally, NHTSA informs the Committee that some of the additional authorized funds will support the New Car Assessment Program (NCAP). NCAP provides consumers with crashworthiness data on passenger motor vehicles. The additional authorization, if funded, would allow the agency to test more models of cars providing consumers with greater information.

The House Commerce Committee recently reported H.R. 2035, a measure increasing the authorization levels for these programs to an annual total of \$107.9 million, slightly below the Administration's request. The Committee recognizes the need to increase NHTSA's authorization levels for both the motor vehicle safety program and the motor vehicle information program. The Committee also realizes that we are near the end of the appropriations process for fiscal year 2000. In an effort to quickly provide the additional authority, the Committee accedes to the House funding levels included in H.R. 2035. The Committee believes this authorizes a significant increase in funding to the agency that will help to fund many of the agency's programs.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR PROVISIONS

S. 1248 would increase NHTSA's authorization level for fiscal years 2000 and 2001 for the motor vehicle safety programs and the motor vehicle information programs. Specifically, it would increase the safety programs from approximately \$81.2 million to \$98.3 million and the information programs from approximately \$6.2 million to \$9.7 million.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Chairman McCain and the ranking member, Senator Hollings, introduced S. 1248 on June 21, 1999. The Committee did not hold hearings on the bill. The Committee reported S. 1248 on June 23, 1999. It is similar to S. 2581 also introduced by Chairman McCain and Senator Hollings at the close of last Congress.

ESTIMATED COSTS

In accordance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee provides the following cost estimate, prepared by the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, June 29, 1999.

Hon. JOHN MCCAIN,
*Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for S. 1248, a bill to correct errors in the authorizations of certain programs administered by the National Highway Traffic Administration.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is James O'Keeffe.

Sincerely,

BARRY B. ANDERSON
(For Dan L. Crippen, *Director*).

Enclosure.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

S. 1248—A bill to correct errors in the authorizations of certain programs administered by the National Highway Traffic Administration

Summary: S. 1248 would increase the authorization of appropriations for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA's) motor vehicle safety and information programs from a total of about \$87 million to about \$108 million for each of fiscal years 2000 and 2001. These two programs were authorized at the current levels of \$81 million and \$6 million, respectively, in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (Public Law 105-178).

Assuming appropriation of authorized amounts, CBO estimates that implementing S. 1248 would result in additional discretionary

spending of about \$40 million over the 2000–2004 period, relative to the amounts authorized under current law. S. 1248 would not affect direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. The bill contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

Estimated Cost to the Federal Government: The estimated budgetary impact of S. 1248 is shown in the following table. For the purposes of this estimate, CBO assumes that S. 1248 will be enacted by the end of fiscal year 1999 and that the authorized amounts will be appropriated for each year. Estimated outlays are based on historical spending patterns for the two affected programs. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 400 (transportation).

	By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—					
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Spending Under Current Law:						
Authorization Level ¹	87	87	87	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays	82	89	90	37	13	4
Proposed Changes:						
Authorization Level	0	20	20	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays	0	12	17	7	3	1
Spending Under S. 1248:						
Authorization Level	87	108	108	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays	82	101	107	44	16	5

¹The 1999 level is the amount appropriated for that year for NHTSA's motor vehicle safety and information programs. Public Law 105–178 authorized the same amount for 2000 and 2001.

Pay-as-you-go considerations: None.

Intergovernmental and private-sector impact: S. 1248 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

Previous CBO estimate: On June 24, 1999, CBO prepared a cost estimate for H.R. 2035, an identical bill ordered reported by the House Committee on Commerce on June 10, 1999. The two cost estimates are identical.

Estimate prepared by: James O’Keeffe.

Estimate approved by: Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT

In accordance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides the following evaluation of the regulatory impact of the legislation, as reported:

Because S. 1248 does not create any new programs, the legislation will have no additional regulatory impact, and will result in no additional reporting requirements. The legislation will have no further effect on the number or types of individuals and businesses regulated, the economic impact of such regulation, the personal privacy of affected individuals, or the paperwork required from such individuals and businesses.

NUMBER OF PERSONS COVERED

The bill as reported would authorize appropriations for NHTSA for fiscal years 2000 and 2001. Therefore, the number of persons covered should be consistent with current levels.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The bill as reported would authorize appropriations for NHTSA for fiscal years 2000 and 2001 for the motor vehicle safety programs at \$98.3 million and the motor vehicle information programs at \$9.7 million.

PRIVACY

The bill as reported would have no adverse impact on the personal privacy of individuals affected.

PAPERWORK

The paperwork requirements associated with the bill as reported are minimal.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Amendments to title 49, United States Code

This section increases the authorization level for each of the fiscal years 2000 and 2001 for the motor vehicle safety programs under chapter 301 of title 49, United States Code, by 17,113,500 to a total of \$98,313,500 for each year. It also increases the level for the motor vehicle information programs under part C of subtitle VI of title 49, United States Code, by \$3,362,500 to a total of \$9,562,500 for the same period.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new material is printed in italic, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

TITLE 49—TRANSPORTATION**Subtitle VI. Motor Vehicle and Driver Programs****PART A—GENERAL****CHAPTER 301—MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY****Subchapter I—General****§ 30104. Authorization of appropriations**

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary **[\$81,200,000]** *\$98,313,500* for the National Highway Traffic Safety

Administration to carry out this part in each fiscal year beginning in fiscal year 1999 and ending in fiscal year 2001.

* * * * *

TITLE 49—TRANSPORTATION

Subtitle VI—Motor Vehicle and Driver Programs

PART C—INFORMATION, STANDARDS, AND REQUIREMENTS

CHAPTER 321—GENERAL

§ 32102. Authorization of appropriations

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary **[\$6,200,000]** *\$9,562,500* for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to carry out this part in each fiscal year beginning in fiscal year 1999 and ending in fiscal year 2001.

