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[H.R. 1162, Science Prize Competitions Act, as amended](#)

FLOOR SITUATION

On Tuesday, May 19, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 1162](#), the *Science Prize Competitions Act, as amended*, under a suspension of the rules. H.R. 1162 was introduced on February 27, 2015, by Rep. Donald Beyer (D-VA) and was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, which ordered the bill reported by voice vote on March 4, 2015.

SUMMARY

H.R. 1162 amends the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 (15 U.S.C. 3719) to clarify that Federal agencies that hold prize competitions to incentivize scientific and technological research may partner with entities in the private sector to support these competitions. The bill also requires Federal agencies to publish notices of prize competitions on publically-accessible government websites, such as Challenge.Gov.

BACKGROUND

Under current law, heads of Federal agencies may hold prize competitions as an incentive for scientific and technological innovation. There are more than 70 agencies across the Federal government that hold competitions with cash prizes for technical, scientific, ideation, and creative competitions in an effort to solve agency mission-centric problems. Since 2010, there have been more than 390 competitions run by various Federal agencies.¹ Federal agencies are permitted to post prize competitions on Challenge.Gov, which is administered by the General Services Administration (GSA). H.R. 1162 would clarify that agencies may partner with both nonprofit and for-profit entities in the private sector to support the competitions and require that notification of the competitions be publicly-available on a government website.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) the bill also would allow agencies that sponsor prize competitions to waive a requirement that participants in such competitions obtain liability insurance to protect the government against claims by third party entities, making the Federal government potentially responsible for paying the cost of successful claims. Because those claims

¹ <https://www.challenge.gov/about/>

would probably be paid from the Treasury's Judgment Fund (a permanent, indefinite appropriation for claims and judgments against the United States), enacting the bill could affect direct spending; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. However, based on information from some agencies that conduct competitions, CBO anticipates that any such cases would be rare and that any effect on direct spending would be insignificant.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information please contact [John Huston](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 6-5539.