

August 2, 1994

THE CRIME BILL: FEW COPS, MANY SOCIAL WORKERS

INTRODUCTION

Congress this week will vote on final passage of a crime bill which purportedly puts 100,000 new police officers on the beat, funds the construction of new prison space, and directs billions in federal funds toward "crime prevention." In reality, the bill provides funding to increase the number of uniformed police officers by only 3 percent nationwide, places a huge new unfunded mandate on the states, and will finance an expensive new layer of social welfare programs.

Specifically, the bill:

- ✓ **Guarantees** full funding for only 20,000 permanent new cops over the next six years, or one-fifth the number claimed by the bill's supporters. This is equivalent to adding about one new officer to every police department in the nation.
- ✓ **Assumes** state and local governments will pick up as much as \$33 billion in new expenditures over the next six years if the bill is to meet the target of 100,000 officers.
- ✓ **Gives** the Attorney General the discretion to decide which cities and states receive the Community Policing funds. This invites handouts to politically connected big-city mayors and politicians.
- ✓ **Adds** at least \$8.7 billion in new social spending, and nearly 30 new social programs, to a welfare system which has cost taxpayers over \$5 trillion since the War on Poverty was created in 1965.
- ✓ **Will** put two new social workers on the street for every new cop it fully funds.

In short, the crime bill turns out to promise more cops on America's streets. In reality, it means few cops, a big tab for cities, and plenty of new social programs and social workers.

WHY THE NUMBERS DO NOT ADD UP

The most publicized portion of the crime bill is the \$8.845 billion Community Policing grant program. The White House claims this measure will put 100,000 new cops on the street over the next six years. But a closer inspection of this claim reveals that the figures simply do not add up.

The intention of the Community Policing grant program in reality is to provide “seed” money to local governments to hire 100,000 new police officers, not to fully fund these positions. So the bill assumes that once these new officers have been hired with Washington’s help, state and local governments will find the billions of new dollars to keep them on permanently. The bill actually provides just one-fifth of the funds needed to keep 100,000 new cops on the street for the next six years, leaving the states with the massive cost of fulfilling the bill’s promise. Even worse, the bill allows local governments to use some of these Community Policing funds for purposes other than hiring new cops, so there is no guarantee that even 20,000 new officers’ positions will actually be funded and cops hired.

Based on salary levels for police officers and overhead costs reported by police departments, the cost of putting one new cop on the street for one year in a high-crime area is estimated at between \$70,000 to \$80,000.¹ Therefore the actual cost of putting 100,000 cops on the street is at least \$7 billion per year, or a minimum of \$42 billion over the six-year life of the bill. But the crime bill provides only \$8.845 billion over the six-year period, or \$1.475 billion per year. Thus in order to permanently place 100,000 new police officers on America’s streets over the next six years, state and local governments who apply for Community Policing grants will have to supplement Washington’s contribution with some \$33 billion of their own funds.

This highly publicized crime bill provides only one-fifth the necessary funding for 100,000 permanent new police. If cities do not cut back on other services or raise taxes, the funds provided in the bill can keep at most just 20,000 permanent cops on the street over the next six years. There are some 600,000 uniformed police officers nationwide, so 20,000 represents an increase of just 3 percent, or the equivalent of adding just one new officer for every police department in the nation.²

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- 1 According to the Census Bureau’s March 1993 Current Population Survey, the nation-wide average salary for a police officer is \$36,366, and for larger cities the figure is closer to \$40,000. A fiscal officer in the San Francisco Police Department reported in a telephone interview that the actual cost of putting a new officer on the street is at least \$71,000. Salary and benefits for this officer are some \$61,000 and the cost of recruiting, examination, and background checks is at least \$10,000. Moreover, for every three new officers hired a typical department must purchase one new police vehicle. This and other administrative costs are not included in the above figure. These one-time costs mean the costs of the typical officer rise to over \$71,000. In addition, quotas and other hiring practices—which are mandated in the crime bill—will make the cost of hiring new officers very expensive, reports the financial officer in the San Francisco Department. To hire 50 qualified officers meeting the quota standards, that department assumes it must recruit, screen, and test at least 200 applicants.
 - 2 But the impact of this additional officer will be slight. Because of rotational schedules, most large city police departments require at least five officers to cover a beat in a 24-hour period.

Another way to look at this financial sleight-of-hand is to calculate how much funding the bill provides per police officer per year. On average, the bill authorizes \$1.475 billion per year for 100,000 new officers. This amounts to just \$14,750 per cop per year—roughly the poverty level for a family of four. Since it is ridiculous to think that quality police officers could be hired for minimum wage salaries, state and local governments would have to absorb the remaining roughly \$60,000 per year cost of hiring and keeping each of these new cops. To meet the 100,000 target, local governments would be responsible for some \$6 billion per year in total new costs.

Supporters of the bill no doubt will argue that local governments will not be stuck with a big tab. They might say, for instance, that the bill caps at \$75,000 the amount local governments may spend initially to hire a new cop and it also limits the federal share of this cost at 75 percent. But this changes the real-world scenario very little. If, for instance, Chicago were to spend \$75,000 to hire a new cop and contribute 25 percent of this cost, the federal share of this new hiree would be over \$56,000. Now, dividing this amount into the \$1.47 billion the bill provides annually for new police would mean it funds only 26,222 permanent new cops. This is still far short of the 100,000 promised.

However the computation is made, the result is the same: the bill actually funds only a small fraction of the promised new officers.

An often overlooked detail, moreover, is the fact that the bill does not require local governments to use all of these Community Policing funds to hire new cops. Indeed, 15 percent of these funds can be used for a variety of social or community activities only tangentially related to law enforcement, and 20 percent of the remaining funds can be spent on equipment, computers, and overtime for existing officers.

For example, cities may use the funds in the following ways:

To enhance police officers' "conflict resolution, mediation, problem solving, service, and other skills needed to work in partnership with members of the community";

To "develop new technologies to assist State and local law enforcement agencies in reorienting the emphasis of their activities from reacting to crime to preventing crime"; and

To "develop and establish new administrative and managerial systems to facilitate the adoption of community-oriented policing as an organization-wide philosophy."

Cities actually have an incentive to use Community Policing funds for other purposes because such programs will not add the future costs of a police officer's pension and other benefits to the municipal budget. Spending the money on items other than new police officers means a city does not have to find ways of covering a funding shortfall after the first year of the bill. Such an incentive system virtually guarantees that fewer than 20,000 new cops will be hired, let alone the purported 100,000.

Supporters of this bill, moreover, have been less than forthcoming in noting that 75 percent of these Community Policing funds can be distributed at the discretion of the Attorney General. This means that there is no guarantee that the funds will be targeted toward cities that are in greatest need of new police. It does mean, however, that the Administration may play politics with these funds and reward politically loyal mayors and local politicians, rather than addressing areas of greatest need.³

SOCIAL WELFARE PORK

Roughly \$8.7 billion of the funds in the crime bill is dedicated to creating nearly 30 new “crime prevention” programs (\$7.4 billion for programs identified as “prevention” and \$1.3 billion for new “Drug Courts”). It turns out that many of these new programs are little more than social welfare pork barrel, adding a new layer of programs onto a welfare system that already costs taxpayers at all levels of government over \$310 billion per year.⁴

Unlike the Community Policing grants, these new grant programs are permanent and will not require matching funds by local government or the private social service organizations who receive the funds. This means that recipients will have more incentive to apply for these funds than the grants intended for new cops. Thus new social service workers will be much less costly for jurisdictions to hire than new police officers. Indeed, if all this new social welfare money goes toward hiring new social workers, the bill will add a minimum of 40,000 social workers per year—at least two social workers will be hired for every cop the bill puts on the street.⁵

The assumption behind these new social programs is that potential criminals can be steered away from a life of crime by targeted government initiatives aimed at altering their environment. In other words, crime will be reduced if government provides community development aid, social services, job training, and recreational activities.

This argument may sound attractive to many taxpayers. But it belies the fact that society has spent \$5 trillion on the War on Poverty since 1965, yet the national crime rate stands at its highest level ever. As shown in Chart 1, welfare spending since 1965 has grown in real terms by 800 percent while the number of major felonies per capita today is roughly three times the typical rates before 1960.⁶ While these two

3 Last year, Congress passed an emergency supplemental bill which included \$150 million in aid to hire 2,000 new police officers. Nearly 45 percent of these funds went to four states: California, Florida, Illinois, and Texas.

4 Robert Rector, “A Comprehensive Urban Policy: How to Fix Welfare and Revitalize America’s Inner Cities,” Heritage Foundation *Memo To: President-Elect Clinton* No. 12, January 18, 1993. p. 17.

5 According to the Current Population Survey, the typical social worker earns less than \$23,000 annually—fully one-third less than the average police officer. Most social workers, especially those working in the non-profit agencies largely funded by the bill, do not have as generous benefits packages as unionized police officers or the training costs (The typical recreational worker earns less than \$12,000 annually). This calculation assumes that the value of a social workers benefit package is half-again as much as their salary, or some \$12,000, for a total cost per social worker of \$36,000.

sets of statistics may not be directly correlated, welfare spending appears to have little impact on reducing the crime rate.

Chart 2 shows that government already has spent lavishly on programs identical to the ones created in the new crime bill. Since 1965, government has spent \$161 billion on community development and economic aid programs, \$202 billion on social service programs, \$204 billion on job training programs, and \$292 billion on targeted education programs. These are exactly the types of federal assistance boosted in the crime bill. They have not cut crime. Moreover, the new programs created by this bill will duplicate at least 50 existing federally funded "crime prevention" grant programs. Among other things, this will compound the overall problem of duplication and overlapping programs identified last year by Vice President Al Gore's National Performance Review. The Performance Review found that:

- ✓ **Some "14 separate government departments and agencies invest \$24 billion a year, through 150 employment and training programs."**⁷
- ✓ **Washington spends "about \$60 billion a year on the well-being of children. But we have created at least 340 separate programs for families and children, administered by 11 different federal agencies and departments."**⁸
- ✓ **"Much of Washington's domestic agenda, \$226 billion, to be precise," is allocated to state and local governments "through an array of more than 600 different grant programs."**

Ten such examples of the 30 new programs added to the current 600, include:

- 1) **Local Partnership Act.** This new community aid program will hand out \$1.8 billion to local governments on a formula basis. The formula is written to reward areas with high tax rates, high unemployment, and low personal income. In other words, cities which have overtaxed their residents will benefit most from the Local Partnership Act.
- 2) **Model Intensive Grants.** This program gives the Attorney General the discretion to award \$895 million to 15 high-crime areas. These funds are intended to accomplish the vague goals of relieving "conditions that encourage crime" and providing "meaningful and lasting alternatives to involvement in crime." In reality, this is likely to be a traditional pork barrel program because priority will be given to areas marked by the "deterioration or lack of public facilities, inadequate public services such as public transportation, street lighting...or employment services offices."⁹

6 Rector, *op. cit.*

7 *The National Performance Review, Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office) September 7, 1993, p. 49.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 51.

9 This specific language was contained in the House version of the crime bill (H.R. 4092) pages 111-112. The Conference Committee language was not available at the time this analysis was written.

- 3) **Youth Employment Skills (YES).** This program will spend \$650 million to “test the proposition that crime can be reduced...through a saturation jobs program.” The 150 job training programs already being funded seem to have done little to reduce the crime rate. The bill’s supporters assume spending more will have an impact.
- 4) **Ounce of Prevention.** This program creates a new interagency council to distribute \$100 million for summer and after-school programs, mentoring and tutoring programs, substance abuse treatment, and job placement. This program duplicates dozens of established federal programs and countless programs run by local governments and non-profit organizations.
- 5) **Family and Community Endeavor Schools (FACES).** This program authorizes the Secretary of Education to dole out some \$270 million to “community-based” organizations. These organizations can use the funds for activities such as “work force preparation, entrepreneurship, cultural programs, arts and crafts,” dance programs, and supervised sports programs. However, community organizations “may not use such funds to provide sectarian worship or instruction.”¹⁰
- 6) **Midnight Sports.** This well-publicized \$40 million program directs the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to establish so-called midnight basketball leagues. The bill specifies how many teams must be in a league, how many players must be on each team, and requires that at least half of the players must live in public housing. Youth involved in this program must live in an area with a substantial drug problem, high crime rates, large numbers of people infected with AIDS, and high illegitimacy rates. One problem apparently overlooked by those supporting the midnight league is that many of the cities toward which this program presumably is targeted have curfews for adolescents.
- 7) **Violence Against Women.** This \$1.8 billion program funds an array of grant programs intended to assist law enforcement agencies and nonprofit groups develop strategies to prevent crimes against women. A large portion of these funds must go to “nonprofit nongovernmental victim services.” The bill establishes the Attorney General’s Task Force on Violence Against Women at a cost of \$500,000. The Task Force may hire an Executive Director at an annual salary of some \$69,000 (GS-15 level) and pay consultants up to \$200 per day.
- 8) **Drug Courts.** Though not officially designated a “prevention” program, this \$1.3 billion grant program is no different from the other new social programs. The Drug Court grants are to be used by local governments or private organizations involved in “continuing judicial supervision over specified categories of persons with substance abuse problems, and that involve the integrated administration of other sanctions and services.” These “other serv-

10 H.R. 4092, p. 120.

ices” include: substance abuse treatment, health care, education, vocational training, job placement, housing placement, and child care or other family support services.¹¹

- 9) **Juvenile Drug Trafficking and Gang Prevention Grants.** This \$125 million program authorizes the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance to make grants to local public and nonprofit organizations for projects intended to steer young people away from gangs and drug activities. Such projects include “school programs that teach that drug and gang involvement are wrong,” and “programs such as youth sports and other activities, including girls and boys clubs, scout troops, and little leagues.”
- 10) **Missing Alzheimer’s Patients.** The bill approves \$3 million in grants to establish a Missing Alzheimer’s Disease Patient Alert Program. Many Americans may approve of such an effort, but it is unclear how this would eliminate violent crime in America’s streets.

CONCLUSION

The crime bill conference report Congress will act on this week does not live up to supporters’ promises to put 100,000 new police officers on the beat. At best the bill will fully fund only 20,000 permanent new cops. Most likely it will mean far fewer because of the strong incentive it gives local governments to use the Community Policing grants for other programs. Still, the bill is good news for social workers: the bill funds a massive expansion of the social welfare system and could put two social welfare workers on the street for every new police officer.

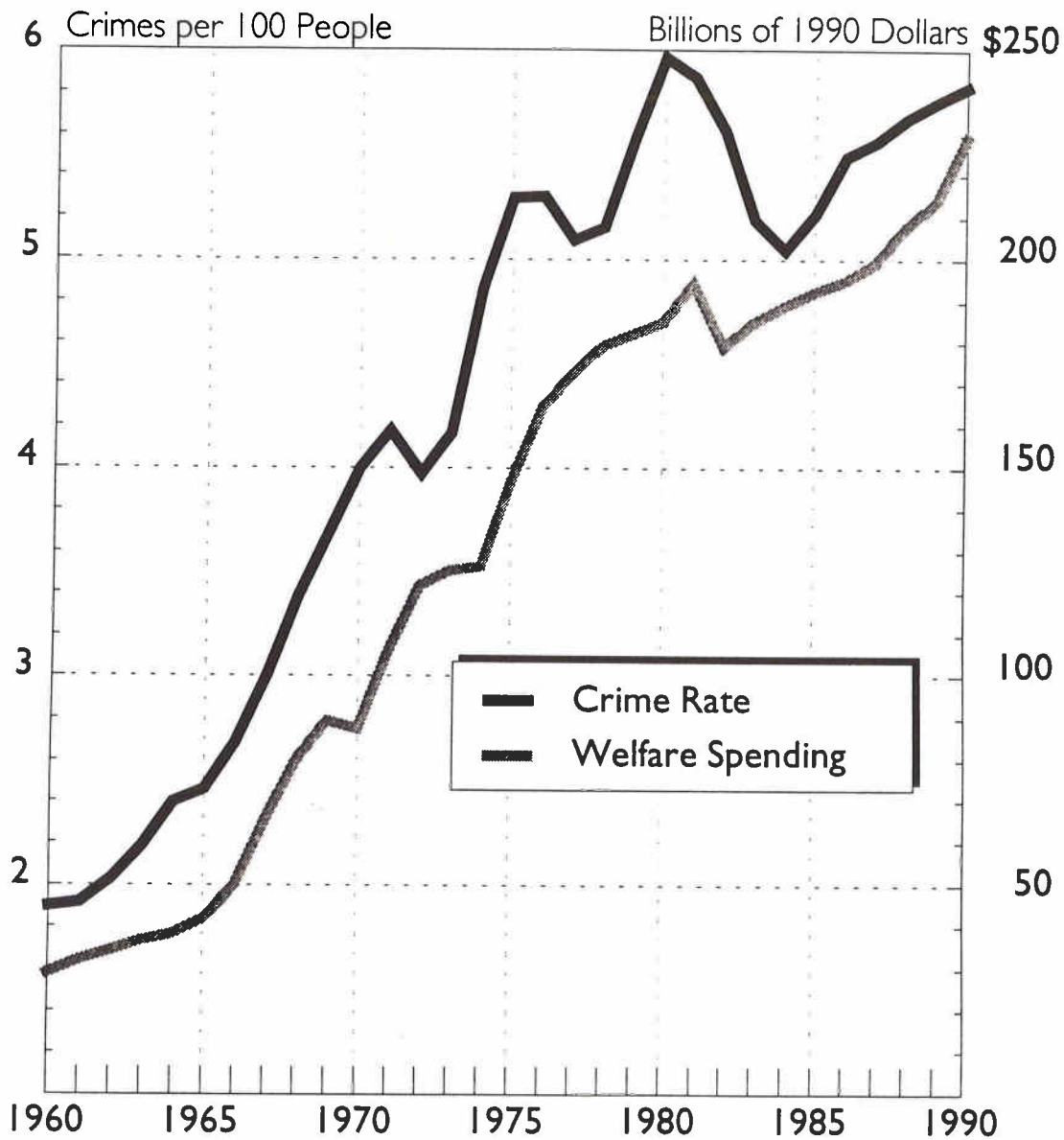
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11 H.R. 4092, p. 149.

Chart I

Does Welfare Reduce Crime? 800% Increase in Spending Has Been Accompanied by a Tripling of the Crime Rate



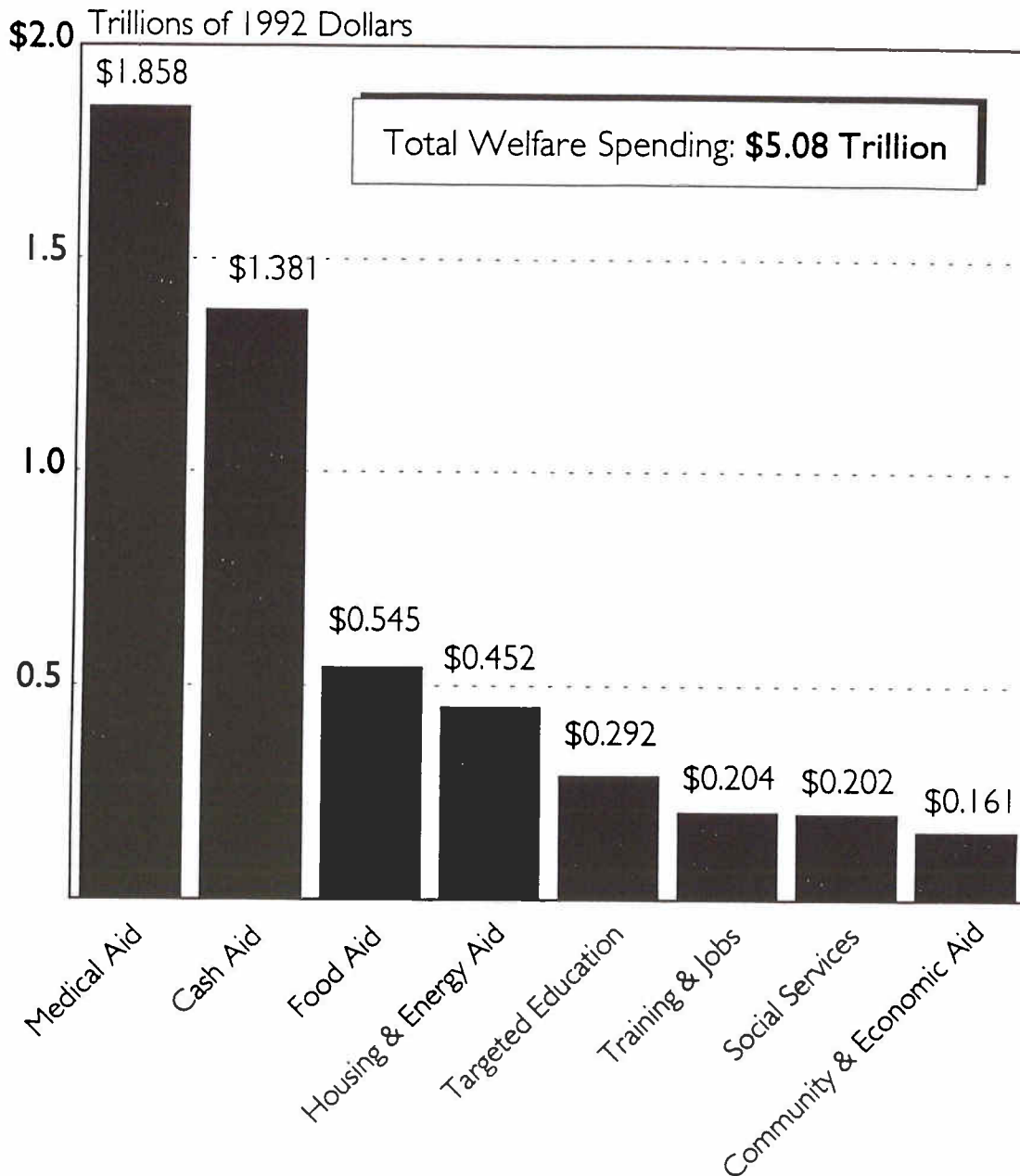
Note: Figures include federal, state and local means-tested welfare spending.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, *Sourcebook for Criminal Justice Statistics*, 1991;

Robert Rector, *The Paradox of Poverty*, 1992.

Chart 2

The War on Poverty: \$5 Trillion From FY1965 to FY 1993



Note: Figures represent combined federal, state and local spending in 1992 dollars.

Source: Robert Rector, The Heritage Foundation, 1993.

THE CRIME BILL'S NEW SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS

New Social Program	Six-Year Cost (\$ Millions)
Local Partnership Act	\$ 1,800
National Community Economic Partnership	\$ 300
Model Intensive Grants	\$ 895
Ounce of Prevention	\$ 100
Child-Centered Activities	\$ 630
Family & Community Endeavor Schools (FACES)	\$ 270
Violence Against Women	\$ 1,800
Youth Employment Skills (YES)	\$ 650
Prison Drug Treatment (State)	\$ 300
Prison Drug Treatment (Federal)	\$ 125
Juvenile Drug Trafficking Gang Prevention	\$ 125
Midnight Sports	\$ 40
Community Youth Academies	\$ 40
Hope in Youth	\$ 20
Gang Prevention Services	\$ 20
Anticrime Youth Councils	\$ 5
Boys and Girls Clubs	\$ 30
Police Partnerships for Children	\$ 20
Safe Low-Income Housing	\$ 10
Triads	\$ 6
Olympic Youth Development	\$ 50
Youth Violence Prevention	\$ 50
Child Visitation	\$ 30
Gang Resistance Education & Training (GREAT)	\$ 22
Missing Alzheimer's Patients	\$ 3
Family Unity	\$ 22
Urban Parks and Recreation	\$ 5
Safe Seniors Corridors	\$ 2
Prevention Total =	\$ 7,370
Drug Courts	\$ 1,300
Total New Social Welfare Programs	\$ 8,670

50 CURRENT PROGRAMS DUPLICATED BY THE CRIME BILL

CFDA Number	Program Name	Estimated Fiscal 1994 Funding (\$ Millions)
16.001	Law Enforcement Assistance - Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs - Laboratory Analysis	\$ 3.73
16.004	Law Enforcement Assistance - Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Training	\$ 5.79
16.005	Public Education on Drug Abuse - Information	\$ 3.59
16.304	Law Enforcement Assistance - National Crime Information Center	\$ 7.73
14.218	Community Development Block Grants	\$ 2,871.00
16.300	Law Enforcement Assistance - FBI Advanced Police Training	\$ 13.74
16.540	Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention - Allocation to states	\$ 72.11
16.541	Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention - Special Emphasis	\$ 8.89
16.542	National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention	\$ 13.90
16.544	Juvenile Gangs and Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking	\$ 5.60
16.547	Victims of Child Abuse	\$ 8.00
16.548	Title V - Delinquency Prevention Program	\$ 13.00
16.550	Criminal Justice Statistics Development	\$ 2.20
16.574	Criminal Justice Discretionary Grant Program	\$ 0.15
16.575	Crime Victim Assistance	\$ 65.46
16.576	Crime Victim Compensation	\$ 60.68
16.577	Emergency Federal Law Enforcement Assistance	\$ 0.22
16.579	Drug Control and System Improvement - Formula Grant	\$ 358.00
16.580	Drug Control and System Improvement - Discretionary Grant	\$ 24.76
16.601	Corrections - Training and Staff Development	\$ 2.03
16.602	Corrections - Research and Evaluation and Policy formulation	\$ 0.22
16.603	Corrections - Technical Assistance/Clearinghouse	\$ 3.50
17.201	Apprenticeship Training	\$ 16.52
17.250	Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)	\$ 2,412.35
27.004	Federal Employment For Disadvantaged Youth - Summer	\$ -
36.001	Fair Competition Counseling and Investigation of Complaints	\$ 92.66
84.013	Chapter 1 Program for Neglected and Delinquent Children	\$ 35.41
84.014	Follow Through	\$ 8.48
84.047	Upward Bound	\$ 182.94
84.184	Drug-Free Schools and Communities - National Programs	\$ 15.00
84.186	Drug-Free Schools and Communities - State Grants	\$ 372.97
84.188	Drug-Free Schools and Communities - Regional Centers	\$ 15.60
84.207	Drug-Free Schools and Communities - School Personnel Training	\$ 13.61
84.233	Drug-Free Schools and Communities - Emergency Grants	\$ 24.55
84.253	Supplementary State Grants for Facilities, Equipment, and other Program Improvement Activities	\$ -
93.102	Demonstration Grants for Residential Treatment for Women and their Children	\$ 29.23
93.122	Cooperative Agreements for Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery Systems for Rural, Remote and Culturally Distinct Populations	\$ 4.00
93.144	Demonstration Grants for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Among High-Risk Youth	\$ 57.38
93.580	Family resource Centers	\$ 5.91
93.600	Head Start	\$ 3,326.29
93.608	Child Welfare Research and Demonstration	\$ 6.47
93.645	Child Welfare Services - State Grants	\$ 294.62
93.647	Social Services Research and Demonstration	\$ 13.83
93.648	Child Welfare Services Training Grants	\$ 4.44
93.657	Drug Education and Prevention for Homeless Youth	\$ 14.60
93.660	Youth Initiative/Youth Gangs	\$ 10.65
93.671	Family Violence Prevention and Services	\$ 27.68
93.672	Community-Based Prevention Program	\$ 5.27
93.902	Model Comprehensive Drug Abuse treatment Programs for Critical Populations	\$ 40.21
93.903	Model Criminal Justice Drug Abuse Treatment for Incarcerated Populations, Non-incarcerated populations and Juvenile Justice Populations	\$ 31.00
Total =		\$ 10,605.98