Cost of Crime

During 1999, losses estimated at nearly $463 million (a 15% increase from 1998) were attributed to robberies. The value of property stolen averaged $1,131 per robbery, ranging from $620 taken during robberies of convenience stores to $4,552 per bank robbery. (Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). 15 October 2000. *Crime in the United States, Uniform Crime Reports, 1999*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 28.)

The dollar value of property stolen in connection with property crimes in 1999 was estimated at over $14.8 billion. The average loss per offense in 1999 was $1,449, compared to the 1998 recorded figure of $1,379. (Ibid., 37)

Based on information from 11,550 law enforcement agencies, 66,321 arson offenses were reported in 1999. The average dollar loss of property damaged due to reported arsons was $10,882. The overall average loss for all types of structures was $19,533. (Ibid., 56)

During 1999, the estimated value of motor vehicles stolen nationwide was over $7.0 billion. The average value per vehicle at the time of theft was $6,104. In relating the value of vehicles stolen to those recovered, the recovery rate for 1999 was 67%. (Ibid., 51)

During 1999, the average value of property stolen due to larceny-theft was $678, up from the 1998 value of $632. Applying the average value to the estimated number of larceny-thefts nationally, the loss to victims was nearly $4.7 billion for the year. (Ibid., 45)

By type of larceny-theft, losses of goods and property stolen as a result of thefts from buildings averaged $1,015 and from motor vehicles, $693. Purse snatching resulted in an average loss of $392. (Ibid.)

Allowing just one youth to leave high school for a life of crime and drug abuse costs society approximately $2 million. (National Center for Juvenile Justice. September 1999. *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.)

Total state correctional expenditures reached over $27 billion dollars in FY 1996, a 115% increase from $12.7 billion in 1985. (Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). August 1999. *State Prison Expenditures, 1996*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.)

In 1996, the average cost to house each of the nation's one million plus state inmates per year was $20,142 compared to $18,400 in 1990. (Ibid.)

The cost for all crime offenses declined in 1997 when compared to 1996 estimated costs. Robbery on streets or highways saw the highest cost reduction percentage per offense (13%), while larceny-theft from buildings saw the lowest (1.1%). (Bureau of Justice Statistics. 1999. *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 1998*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 284, table 3.124.)

In 1997, the cost of arson-related structural damage within the U.S. was just over $782 million. The cost of arson-related vehicular damage added another $103 million in losses in the arson category. (Ibid., 324, table 3.187)

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