

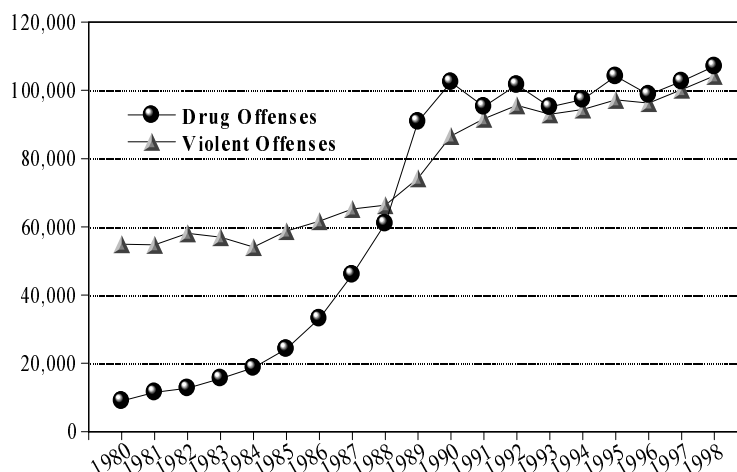
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Number of New Commitments to State Prisons for Drug Offenses Has Increased Dramatically Since 1980; May Be Leveling Off

The number of drug offenders sentenced to state prisons each year has increased nearly twelve-fold, from 9,000 in 1980 to 107,000 in 1998, while the number of violent offenders sentenced has nearly doubled over this period (from 54,900 to 104,200). In 1989, the number of new state prison commitments for drug offenses surpassed those for violent offenses. Since then, yearly drug offense commitments to state prisons appear to have leveled off at a slightly higher number than violent offenses. The cost of incarcerating drug offenders currently exceeds \$9 billion annually.

**Number of New Commitments Each Year to
State Prison for Drug and Violent Offenses, 1980-1998**



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from Schiraldi V., Holman B., Beatty P., *Poor Prescription: The Costs of Imprisoning Drug Offenders in the United States*, Justice Policy Institute Policy Report, July 2000 (available online at <http://www.cjcj.org/drug/pp.pdf>) and Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Prisoners in 1999*, Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin, August 2000 (available online at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/p99.pdf>).