

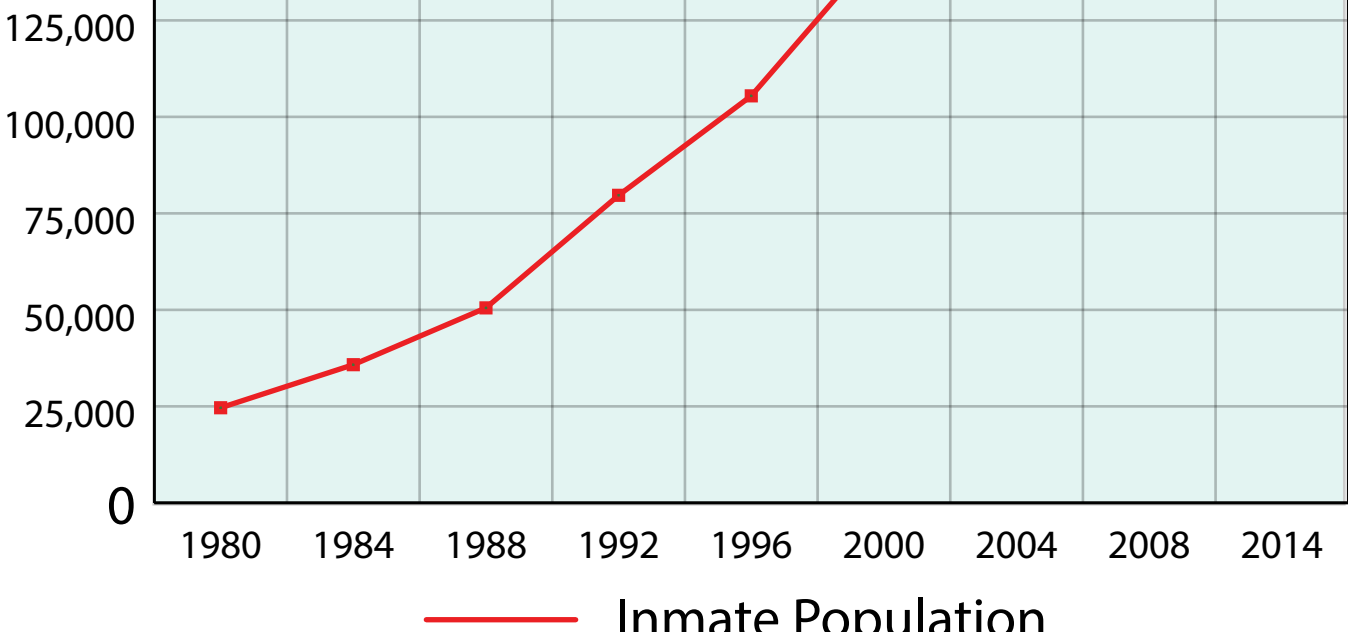
Overcrowding in Federal Prisons

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Overcrowding has become a big issue in the federal prison system for the past 25 years. Since the early 1980's there has been an unprecedented increase in the federal prison population.

The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) was established in 1930 and is the largest correctional agency in the country in terms of number of prisons under its jurisdiction. The prison population had been stagnant from 1930 until 1980. **Since 1980, the total number of inmates under BOP's jurisdiction increased from 25,000 in 1980 to 205,000 in 2015.** The federal prison population increased on average by 5,900 inmates annually from 1980 until 2013.

Inmate growth 1980-2014

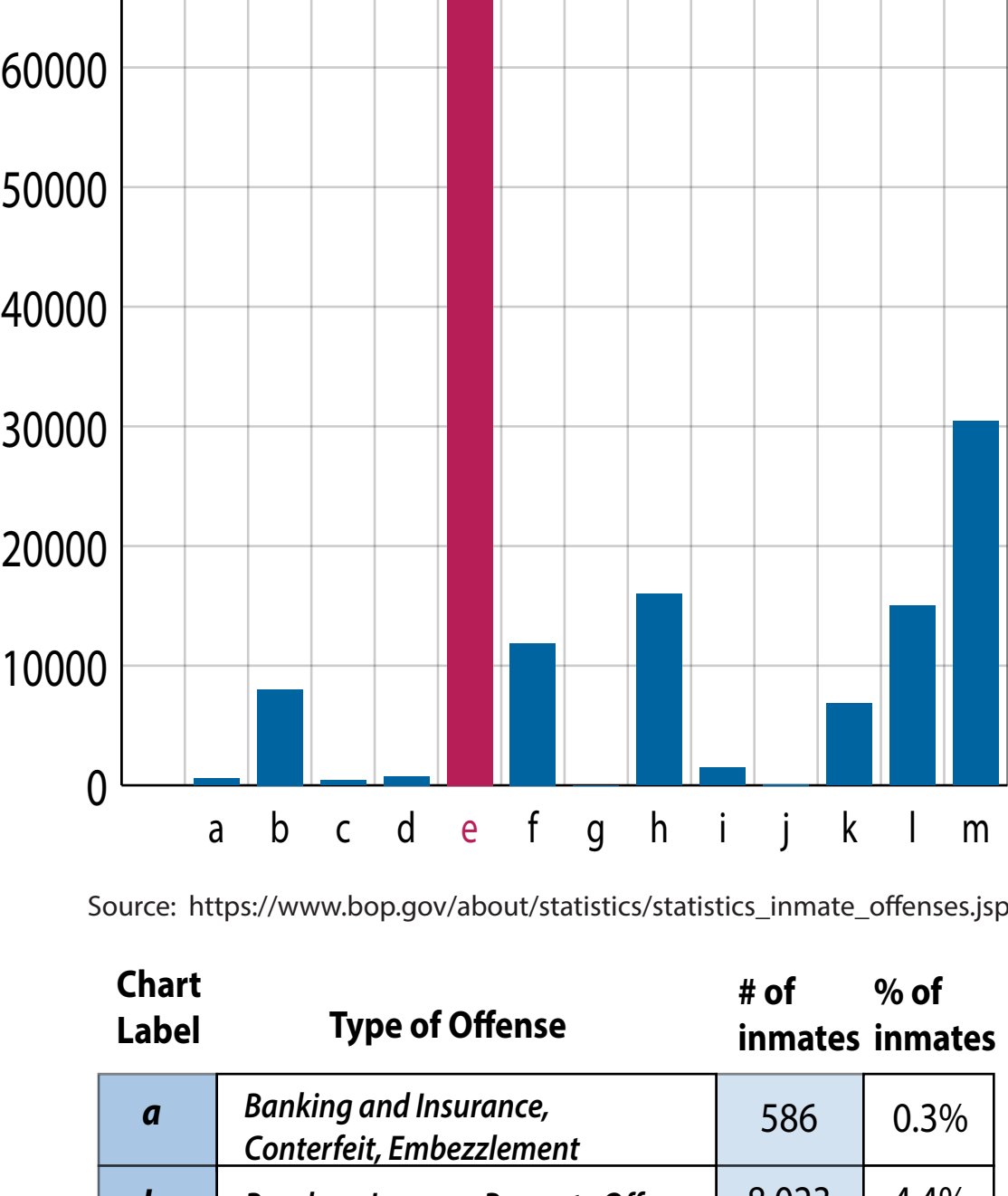


Source: <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42937.pdf>

What caused the growth of prison populations?

The U.S. Sentencing Commission, BOP and scholars have identified several policy changes that have contributed to the growth of the federal prison population. Those include increases in the number of federal offenses subject to mandatory minimum sentences, changes to the federal criminal code that have made more crimes federal offenses, and the elimination of parole. **There are currently 84,226 people in federal prisons incarcerated for non-violent drug offenses.**

2016 Federal Prison Population Based on Offense Type



Source: https://www.bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics_inmate_offenses.jsp

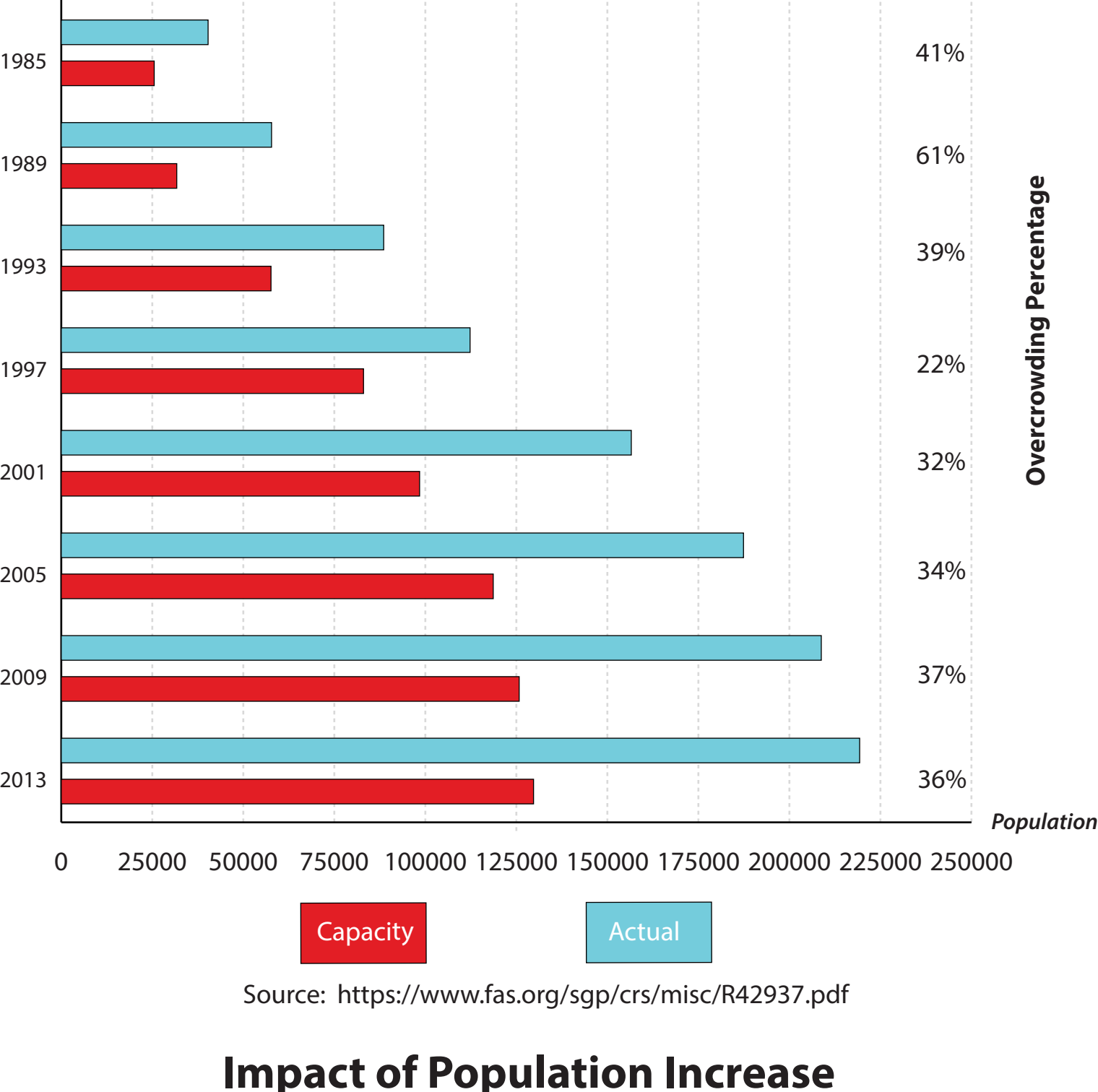
Chart Label	Type of Offense	# of inmates	% of inmates
a	Banking and Insurance, Conterfeit, Embezzlement	586	0.3%
b	Burglary, Larceny, Property Offenses	8,023	4.4%
c	Continuing Criminal Enterprise	424	0.2%
d	Courts or Corrections	760	0.4%
e	Drug Offenses	83,982	46.4%
f	Extortion, Fraud, Bribery	11,878	6.6%
g	Homicide, Aggravated Assault Kidnapping Offenses	5,554	3.1%
h	Immigration	15,990	8.8%
i	Miscellaneous	1,455	0.8%
j	National Security	77	0.0%
k	Robbery	6,850	3.8%
l	Sex Offenses	15,027	8.3%
m	Weapons, Explosives, Arson	30,469	16.8%

Source: https://www.bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics_inmate_offenses.jsp

Overcapacity within Federal Prisons

Federal prisons have decreased in population in the past two years, however they are still 22% overcapacity. BOP reported increased use of double and triple bunking, which brings together inmates with a higher risk of violence and more potential victims. They also have waiting lists for education and drug treatment programs. There are also limited work opportunities, crowded visiting rooms, which impacts the mental well-being of inmates. Finally, there are in-creased inmate to staff ratios, which can hurt safety.

Overcrowding of Federal Prisons

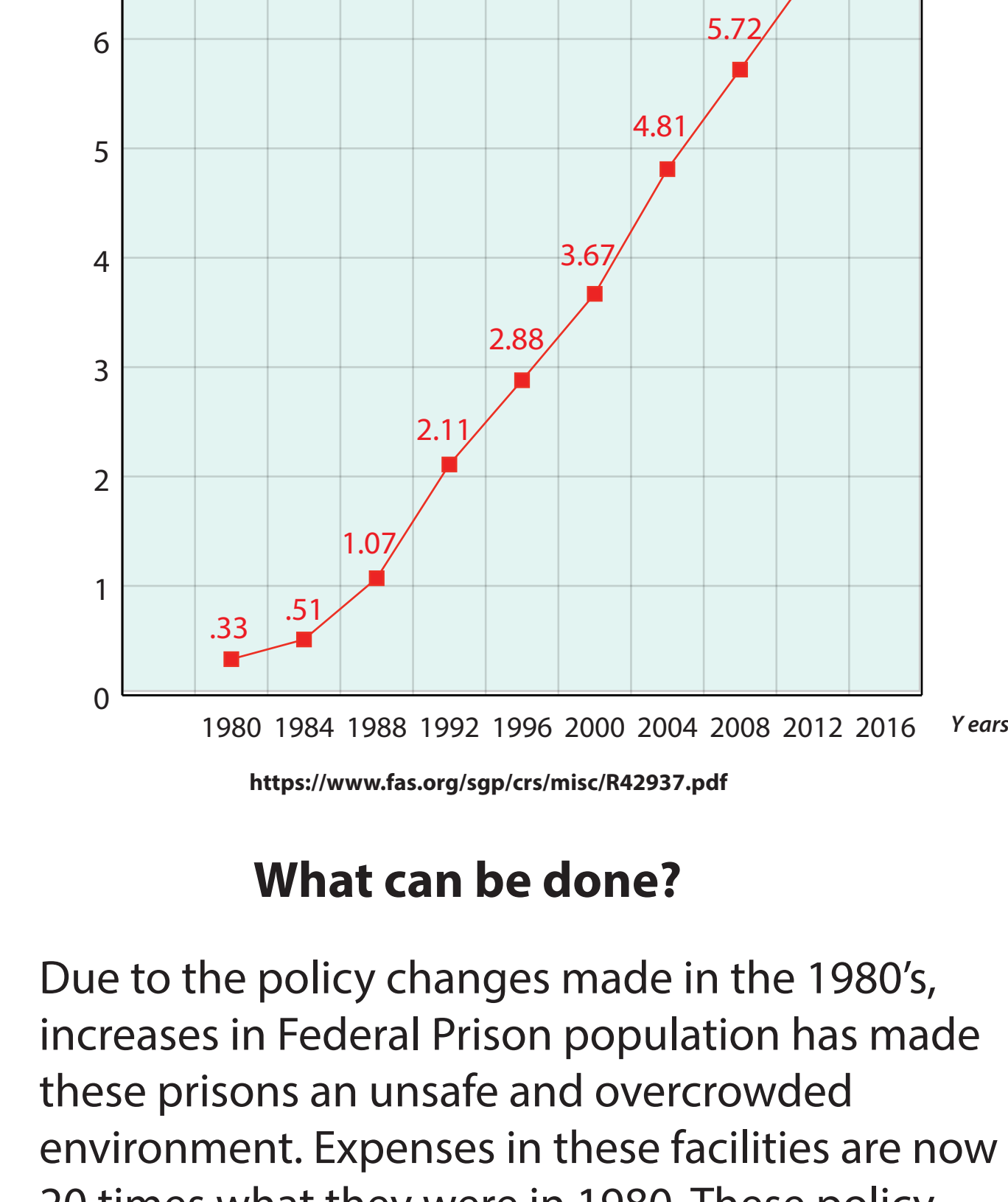


Source: <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42937.pdf>

Impact of Population Increase on Prison Expenses

The increase in prison population has contributed to mounting operational expenditures for the federal prison system. **BOP's expenses increased more than \$7.1 billion from 1980 (\$330 million) to 2016 (\$7.479 billion).** BOP's expanding budget is starting to consume a larger share of the Department of Justice. This may be why they have started to decrease population in federal prisons.

Federal Prison Expenses 1980-2016



<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42937.pdf>

What can be done?

Due to the policy changes made in the 1980's, increases in Federal Prison population has made these prisons an unsafe and overcrowded environment. Expenses in these facilities are now 20 times what they were in 1980. These policy-changes need to be altered to limit the amount of prisoners who were convicted of minor drug of-fenses. There also needs to be changes that limit the amount of crimes deemed to be federal offenses. Finally, parole needs to be established in Federal facilities to limit the time spent behind bars.