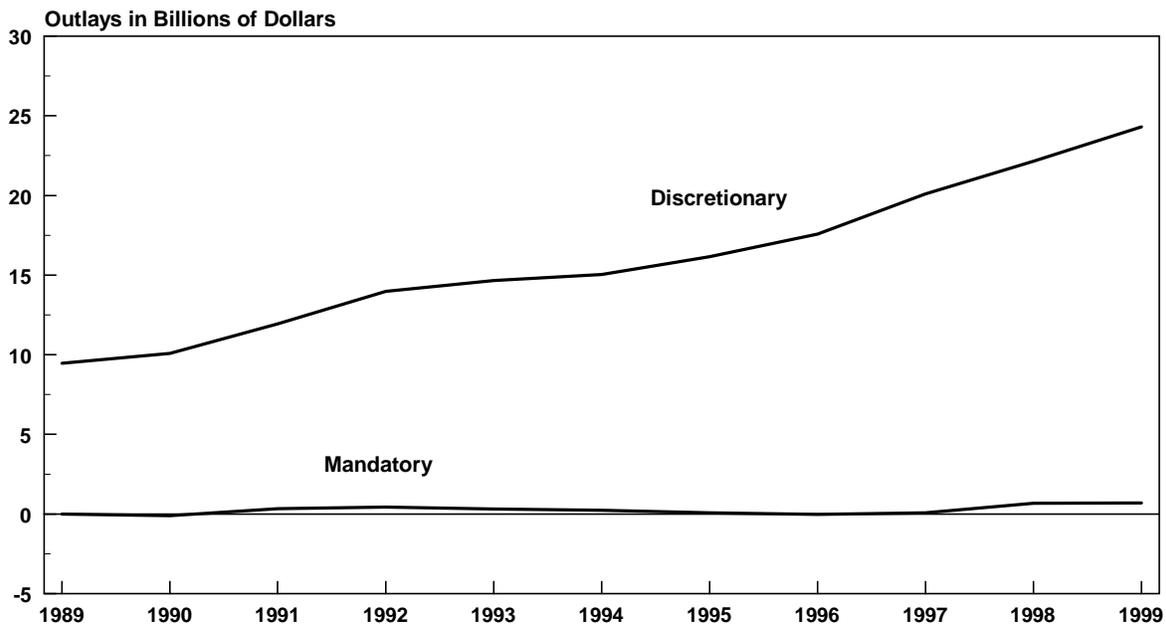


750

Administration of Justice

Budget function 750 funds programs that provide judicial services, law enforcement, and prison operation. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Customs Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the federal court system are all supported under this function. CBO estimates that discretionary outlays for function 750 will total almost \$25 billion in 1999, and discretionary budget authority of more than \$26 billion was provided for the function this year. Over the past 10 years, the share of federal outlays accounted for by this function has increased steadily, from less than 1 percent to almost 1.5 percent.



750-01 REDUCE FUNDING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS TO CONTROL ILLEGAL DRUGS

Savings
(Millions of dollars)
Budget
Authority Outlays

Annual

2000	2,370	1,618
2001	2,370	2,130
2002	2,370	2,266
2003	2,370	2,328
2004	2,370	2,342
2005	2,370	2,348
2006	2,370	2,370
2007	2,370	2,370
2008	2,370	2,370
2009	2,370	2,370

Cumulative

2000-2004	11,848	10,684
2000-2009	23,696	22,511

SPENDING CATEGORY:

Discretionary

RELATED OPTIONS:

750-02 and 800-05

The federal government currently allocates nearly \$18 billion a year for controlling illegal drugs. Of that amount, approximately \$2.4 billion is designated for efforts to prevent drugs from entering the United States. Both domestic agencies and the Department of Defense carry out law enforcement efforts to control illegal drugs. Approximately two-fifths of the funds for interdiction and international activities are allocated under the administration of justice budget function. Another one-fourth is allocated to defense-related efforts. (The remainder is split between the transportation and international affairs budget functions.) Eliminating funds for drug interdiction and international activities, which may be relatively less effective than domestic antidrug efforts, would save \$1.6 billion in the first year, \$10.7 billion over five years, and \$22.5 billion over 10 years.

Critics of the funding claim that interdiction and international activities are both more costly and less effective than other antidrug efforts; that no clear proof of their efficacy exists; and that the federal government could drastically reduce the resources devoted to such activities without affecting drug use over the long term. In fact, some sources show that illicit drugs are less expensive and more readily available now than they were before the federal government began trying to control them. Interdiction and international activities do not reduce the demand for drugs and have less impact on the price users pay than state and locally funded efforts. Interdiction and international activities affect producers' costs, which are only a small part of the users' charges. The bulk of those charges are added in the later stages of processing and delivery. (Of course, local and state efforts to control the supply of drugs also face several obstacles: competition among producers and distributors, the large markup from wholesale to retail prices, and the ability of distributors to dilute the drug to maintain an end price that customers can afford.)

Proponents argue that a variety of reasons exist to support interdiction and international activities. Notable successes, including the destruction of major drug trafficking organizations and the large quantities of illegal drugs seized or destroyed, contradict claims of ineffectiveness. In fact, supporters of interdiction and international activities argue that street prices would have been much lower, and the availability of drugs much greater, without extensive funding for criminal justice efforts. Moreover, if the goal of the federal government is to control, and not simply to reduce, the use of illegal drugs, some effort to reduce the flow of drugs into the country will be necessary. Proponents of antidrug activities argue that given the unacceptably high level of drug use, the government should reform allegedly ineffective programs rather than eliminate them. Finally, in cases where antidrug activities are integrated with other agency functions, cutting back funding for interdiction and international efforts would also disrupt those related activities.

750-02 REDUCE FUNDING FOR JUSTICE ASSISTANCE AND CERTAIN JUSTICE-RELATED ACTIVITIES

	Savings (Millions of dollars)	
	Budget Authority	Outlays
Annual		
2000	502	410
2001	504	476
2002	504	504
2003	504	504
2004	504	504
2005	504	504
2006	504	504
2007	504	504
2008	504	504
2009	504	504
Cumulative		
2000-2004	2,518	2,398
2000-2009	5,038	4,918

SPENDING CATEGORY:

Discretionary

RELATED OPTIONS:

750-01 and 800-05

In addition to the law enforcement activities that the Department of Justice carries out directly, it and related government entities provide various types of law enforcement or legal assistance to individuals, community organizations, and state and local law enforcement agencies. That assistance, which amounted to \$1.3 billion in 1999, can take the form of direct payments to individuals; financial grants to carry out projects or conduct research; information, training, or services; or in-kind grants. This option would consolidate and reform justice assistance programs and reduce the amount spent on them by 20 percent. It would also terminate the Legal Services Corporation and the State Justice Institute. Those cuts can, of course, be considered separately. Taken together, they would save \$410 million in 2000, \$2.4 billion over five years, and \$4.9 billion by 2009.

The two greatest criticisms of the justice assistance programs are that they do not respond to local concerns and priorities and that they often address problems that are not federal responsibilities. Consolidating the grant programs administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance would yield administrative savings, and switching from categorical to block grants would allow grant recipients to focus their efforts on areas of greatest need rather than on problems that, though significant nationally, are less important locally. Similar arguments apply to the Legal Services Corporation, which provides legal assistance to the poor in civil matters. Critics contend that responsibility for such assistance more properly lies with state and local governments. Some critics also charge that the activities of Legal Service lawyers tend to focus on advancing social causes rather than on helping poor people with routine legal problems. (The Congress modified the Legal Services Corporation in 1996, restricting the types of cases and clients it could represent by, for example, prohibiting the corporation's lawyers from representing plaintiffs in class-action suits.) The State Justice Institute, which makes grants for research on criminal justice matters, likewise faces questions of responsibility and jurisdiction. The criticisms leveled against the institute are that much of the research it sponsors is similar to that conducted elsewhere and that in neglecting to publicize the research or cooperate with the courts in instituting reforms and new ideas, it does too little to affect the states' actual administration of justice.

Supporters of funding for justice assistance argue that it is merited on practical grounds. The categorical grant system, they maintain, is working as intended: in certain cases, the problems the grants address have a national scope but might be ignored by states without the incentive of federal funds. Reduced federal spending would, moreover, disproportionately affect those state-run programs that depend heavily on federal funding, such as juvenile justice. In defending the Legal Services Corporation and the State Justice Institute, opponents of this option argue that the federal government has an obligation to provide assistance in areas with scarce support from state and private sources.