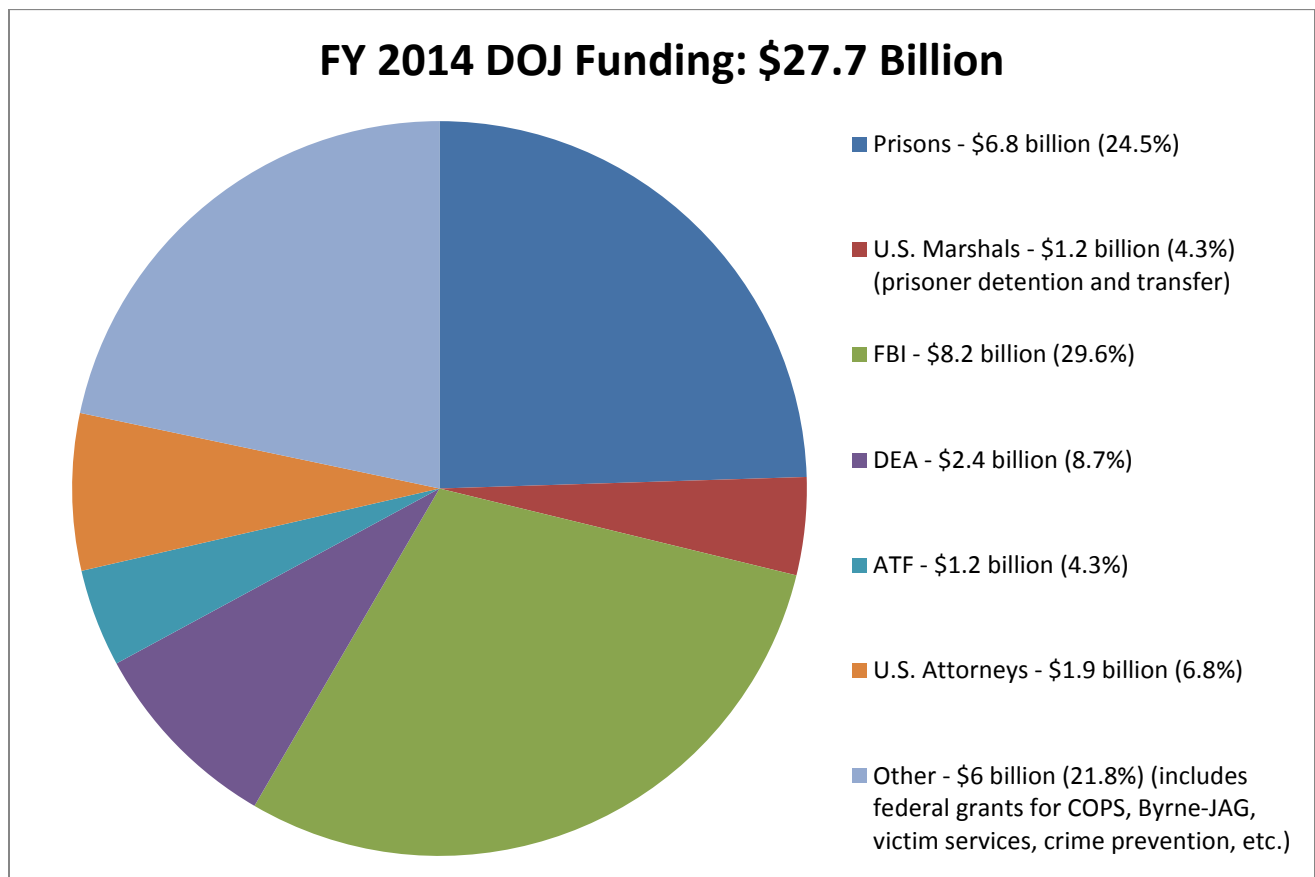


FEDERAL PRISON SPENDING AT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE: UNSUSTAINABLE AND DANGEROUS

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) calls spending on federal prisons “unsustainable” and a threat to public safety.¹ Since the creation of lengthy mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses in the 1980s, the federal prison population has exploded by over 800 percent, to about 216,000 inmates today – half of which are drug offenders.² In FY 2014, federal prisons and detention will consume more than a full quarter (**28.8%**) of the DOJ’s crime-fighting budget.³ Absent significant budget increases (which are unlikely) or sentencing reforms, prison populations and costs will only grow.⁴ This threatens public safety by jeopardizing funding for prosecutors, investigators, state and local law enforcement, reentry, and victim services. Every dollar spent on locking up nonviolent offenders for too long is a dollar that can’t be used to protect the public and fight violent crime. Sentencing reform will save money and make us safer.



¹ Michael E. Horowitz, Inspector General, Top Management and Performance Challenges Facing the Dep’t of Justice – 2013, at <http://www.justice.gov/oig/challenges/2013.htm>.

² Bureau of Prisons, Historical Information, at <http://www.bop.gov/about/history/> and Inmate Statistics: Offenses, at http://www.bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics_inmate_offenses.jsp.

³ U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, Summary: Fiscal Year 2014 Omnibus Appropriations Bill 5-7 (Jan. 13, 2014), at <http://www.appropriations.senate.gov/news.cfm?method=news.view&id=5aa8e660-f52e-4074-945f-9618eb963ae9>.

⁴ Horowitz, *supra* note 1.