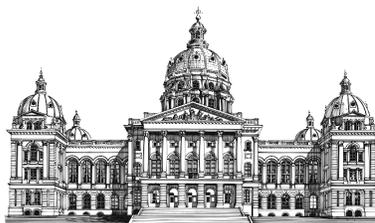


Iowa Legislative Fiscal Bureau



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Growth In The Prison Population

ISSUE

A review of factors affecting prison population growth, effects on workload, and budget requirements.

AFFECTED AGENCIES

Department of Corrections (DOC)

CODE AUTHORITY

Chapter 246, Code of Iowa, and SF 267

BACKGROUND

The prison population has grown from 2,886 in FY 1988 to 4,695 in FY 1993. This is an increase of 1,809 inmates or 62.7%. Over the last 5 years, the design capacity of the prisons has increased from 2,918 beds to 3,603 beds, an increase of 23.5%. The current inmate population is 130.3% of the design capacity. (See Attachment A.)

The prisons' budget has increased from \$55.7 million in FY 1988 to \$82.4 million in FY 1993. Attachment B presents the budget increase removing the effects of inflation. It shows that in 1988 dollars, the FY 1993 budget would be worth \$67.5 million. In terms of purchasing power, the prisons' budget has increased by 21.1% since FY 1988 which is well below the 62.7% increase in inmate population, and is even below the growth in current design capacity.

A prison is a 24-hour-a-day, 7-days-a-week operation. It requires 3 shifts of personnel throughout the regular work week, plus staffing for weekends. Generally, 5 persons (or FTE positions) are required for each job in an around-the-clock operation. Since FY 1988, staffing levels have increased by 9.3%, again well below the 62.7% increase in inmate population. (See Attachment B.)

The lag in the growth of the prison budget behind the growth in the prison population resulted in an increased workload. The workload between FY 1988 and FY 1993 has increased by 49.8%. (See Attachment C.) The inmate-to-staff ratio has gone from 1.9 inmates per FTE position to 2.8 inmates per FTE position. The ratio of inmates per FTE position includes the wardens, administrators, and other staff whose workload is minimally affected by the inmate

population along with correctional officers and direct-contact staff whose workload is strongly affected by the number of inmates.

CURRENT SITUATION

The growth in the prison population is being impacted by an overall increase in crimes leading to incarceration and to a substantial increase in certain types of crime. In the decade between 1982 and 1993, the number of inmates in prison for drug violations has increased by 587.0% (from 77 to 529 inmates). The Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning Division attributes this to increased drug use (particularly cocaine), increased prosecutions resulting from the "war on drugs," and to a tendency to prosecute the offenses as Class C, rather than Class D felonies, which leads to more and longer prison sentences. (See Attachment D.)

Rape and sexual assault is the second most rapidly growing type of crime leading to incarceration. The number of inmates in prison for sexual crimes increased from 231 in 1982 to 422 in 1993, an increase of 182.7%.

If these 2 types of crimes were excluded, the prison population would have increased by 37.7% during this time period. When they are included, the prison population increased by 64.5%. (The prison cap prevented growth in the prison population during the first part of this time period.)

ALTERNATIVES

Additional beds could be constructed to house the growth in inmates. Based on FY 1992 national averages, the construction costs are estimated to be \$35,889 per minimum security bed, \$56,435 per medium security bed, and \$75,010 per maximum security bed. Current projections show an additional 352 inmates by the end of 1996. If these inmates were evenly distributed across the 3 security levels, the construction costs would be \$19.6 million. The annual operating costs vary greatly and are dependent upon where the beds are added and the physical layout of the construction.

Over the past several years, Iowa has introduced a variety of community-based treatment alternatives to incarceration. The prison populations have continued to grow. In FY 1994, Iowa will spend approximately \$19,000 per incarcerated inmate. It may be an appropriate time to consider the cost effectiveness of prevention of crime, in addition to the current approach of treatment and rehabilitation.

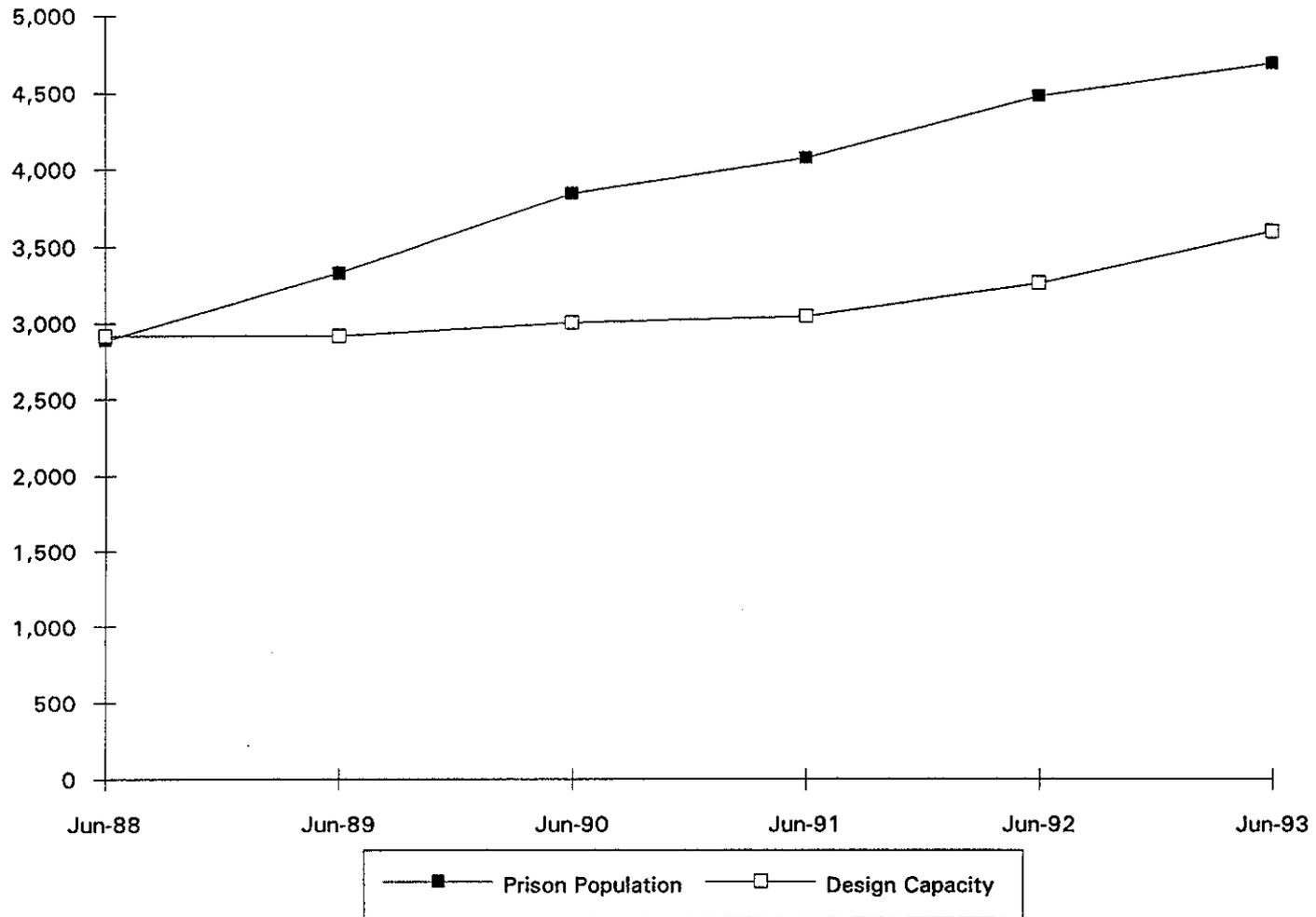
BUDGET IMPACT

The prison population is projected to be 5,047 by the end of calendar year 1996. This is an increase of 352 (7.5%) compared to the end of FY 1993. Assuming no new construction, design capacity will be exceeded by 1,444 inmates (140.1%). In the past, the DOC has budgeted \$19 per day for each inmate added to the population (assuming no change in capacity). This growth will cost approximately \$2.4 million annually for inmate support costs.

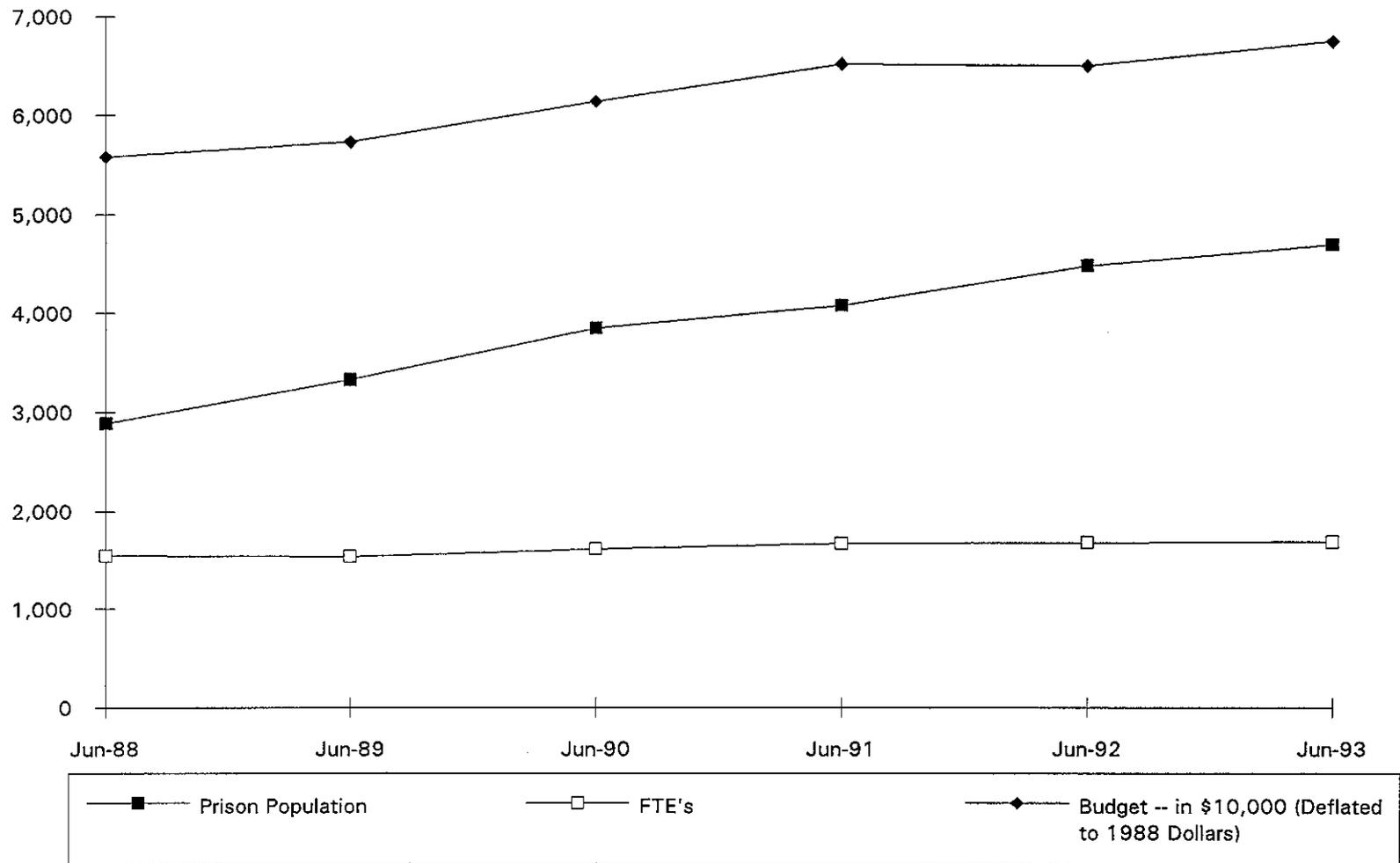
In FY 1994, the Legislature appropriated an increase of \$4.7 million over FY 1993 expenditures. In addition to paying inmate support costs, the prisons began filling currently vacant but approved FTE positions. It is estimated the prisons will have an increase of 148.2 FTE positions in FY 1994 as compared to FY 1993. This will bring the workload down by 6.5% (i.e., to 2.6 inmates per FTE position). The workload will still be 39.0% higher than in FY 1988. If no more staff are added between FY 1994 and year-end 1996, the workload is expected to increase to 2.75 inmates per FTE position.

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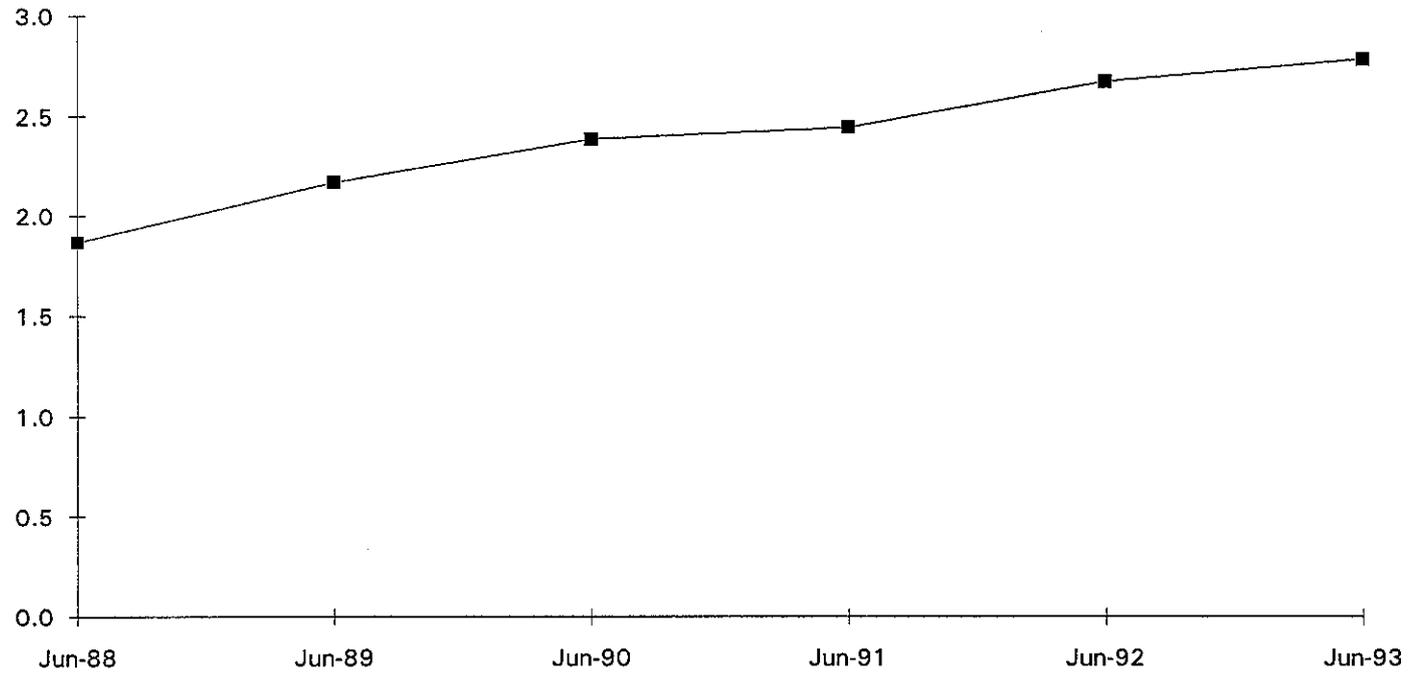
Iowa Prison Population Compared to Design Capacity



Increases in Iowa Prison Population, Staffing and Budget (in \$10,000 Increments and Deflated for Inflation)



Iowa Prison Workload: Inmates Per FTE Position



Iowa Prison Population by Lead Offense Type

Offense Category	December 1982			April 1993			Number Increase	Percentage Increase	Increase Rank
	Number	Percent	Rank	Number	Percent	Rank			
Burglary	715	25.3 %	1	1,000	21.5 %	1	285	39.9 %	3
Robbery/Extortion	460	16.3	2	389	8.4	6	-71	-15.4	12
Stolen Property, Theft, Embezzlement, Larceny	262	9.3	3	475	10.2	4	213	81.3	4
Homicide	257	9.1	4	433	9.3	5	176	68.5	5
Rape/Sexual Assault	231	8.2	5	653	14.0	2	422	182.7	2
Forgery	177	6.3	6	170	3.7	8	-7	-4.0	10
Assault	106	3.7	7	256	5.5	7	150	141.5	6
Drug Law Violation	77	2.7	8	529	11.4	3	452	587.0	1
Bad Checks/Fraud	67	2.4	9	10	0.2	12	-57	-85.1	11
Arson	45	1.6	10	52	1.1	10	7	15.6	9
Kidnapping	43	1.5	11	87	1.9	9	44	102.3	7
Weapons Offense	26	0.9	12	52	1.1	11	26	100.0	8
Misc.	363	12.8		547	11.8		184	50.7	
Total	2,829	100.0 %		4,653	100.0 %		1,824	64.5 %	