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United States General Accounting Office

Fact Sheet for the Honorable
Paul Laxalt, Chairman, Subcommittee
on Criminal Law, Committee on the
Judiciary, United States Senate

June 1986

CRIMINAL FINES

Imposed and Collected as a Result of Investigations of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Program

102519

U.S. Department of Justice
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General Government Division

B-223391

June 27, 1986

The Honorable Paul Laxalt
Chairman, Subcommittee on Criminal Law
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

By letter dated June 19, 1985, you requested that we examine selected accomplishments of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) Program. On April 28, 1986, we briefed your staff on the preliminary results of our work. At that time, we had completed an analysis of court records on 1,442 offenders who were convicted and sentenced during 1983 and 1984 under the OCDETF Program. Your office requested that we determine, for the 1,442 offenders, the dollar amount of (1) criminal fines that could have been imposed by the courts at sentencing, (2) criminal fines imposed by the courts, and (3) criminal fines collected as of December 31, 1985. This information may be useful during congressional deliberations on a proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984, expanding the Sentencing Commission's authority over the imposition, modification, and remission of criminal fines.¹

The 1,442 convicted and sentenced offenders were identified from information supplied to us by the Drug Task Force Administrative Unit within the Department of Justice. Additional details on our scope and methodology are included in appendix I.

Our examination of court records showed that criminal fines totaling about \$57 million could have been imposed by the courts on 1,440 offenders.² The two remaining offenders were convicted under statutes which do not authorize the court to impose fines. Criminal fines totaling about \$8 million were imposed by the courts for 315 of the 1,440 offenders. The median fine imposed by the court was \$7,000. We determined that 7 percent, or about \$509,000, of the total

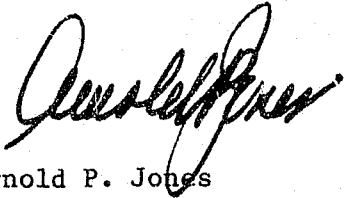
¹The U.S. Sentencing Commission is required by Public Law 98-473 to develop sentencing guidelines to be used by federal judges.

²We defined the amount of the fine that could have been imposed for each defendant as the minimum amount the court could have imposed for charges that the defendant pled guilty to or for which the defendant was convicted.

finer imposed, had been collected by the government as of December 31, 1985. Additional analyses are presented in appendix I.

As requested by your office, we are sending copies of this fact sheet to each member of the House and Senate Committees on the Judiciary. Also, we are sending copies of this fact sheet to interested parties and will make copies available to others upon request. If there are any questions regarding the content of this document, please call me at (202) 275-8389.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Arnold P. Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Arnold P. Jones
Senior Associate Director

ORGANIZED CRIME DRUG ENFORCEMENT
TASK FORCE PROGRAM

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

Our objective was to provide the Chairman, Subcommittee on Criminal Law, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, with information on the dollar amounts of criminal fines which (1) could have been imposed by the courts at sentencing, (2) were imposed by the courts, and (3) had been collected as of December 31, 1985, for defendants prosecuted as a result of the OCDETF Program.

The Drug Task Force Administrative Unit within the Department of Justice furnished us with a list of 1,484 defendants prosecuted by the task forces during 1983 and 1984. We dropped 107 defendants from further examination because (1) 42 had all charges dismissed, (2) 35 were acquitted of all charges, (3) 16 had not been sentenced, and (4) 14 were not prosecuted by the task force. We added 157 defendants who, according to court records, were convicted and sentenced as a part of the OCDETF Program but were not included in the list furnished to us by the Department of Justice. Also, we added an additional 129 offenders sentenced in 1985 who were co-defendants of offenders sentenced in 1983 and 1984. This gave us a total of 1,663 offenders. As of April 28, 1986, we had completed our analyses of court records for 1,442 of the 1,663 offenders.

Table I.1 shows the range of fines actually imposed by the courts at sentencing. Figure I.1 compares the fines that could have been imposed with those actually imposed and collected as of December 31, 1985.

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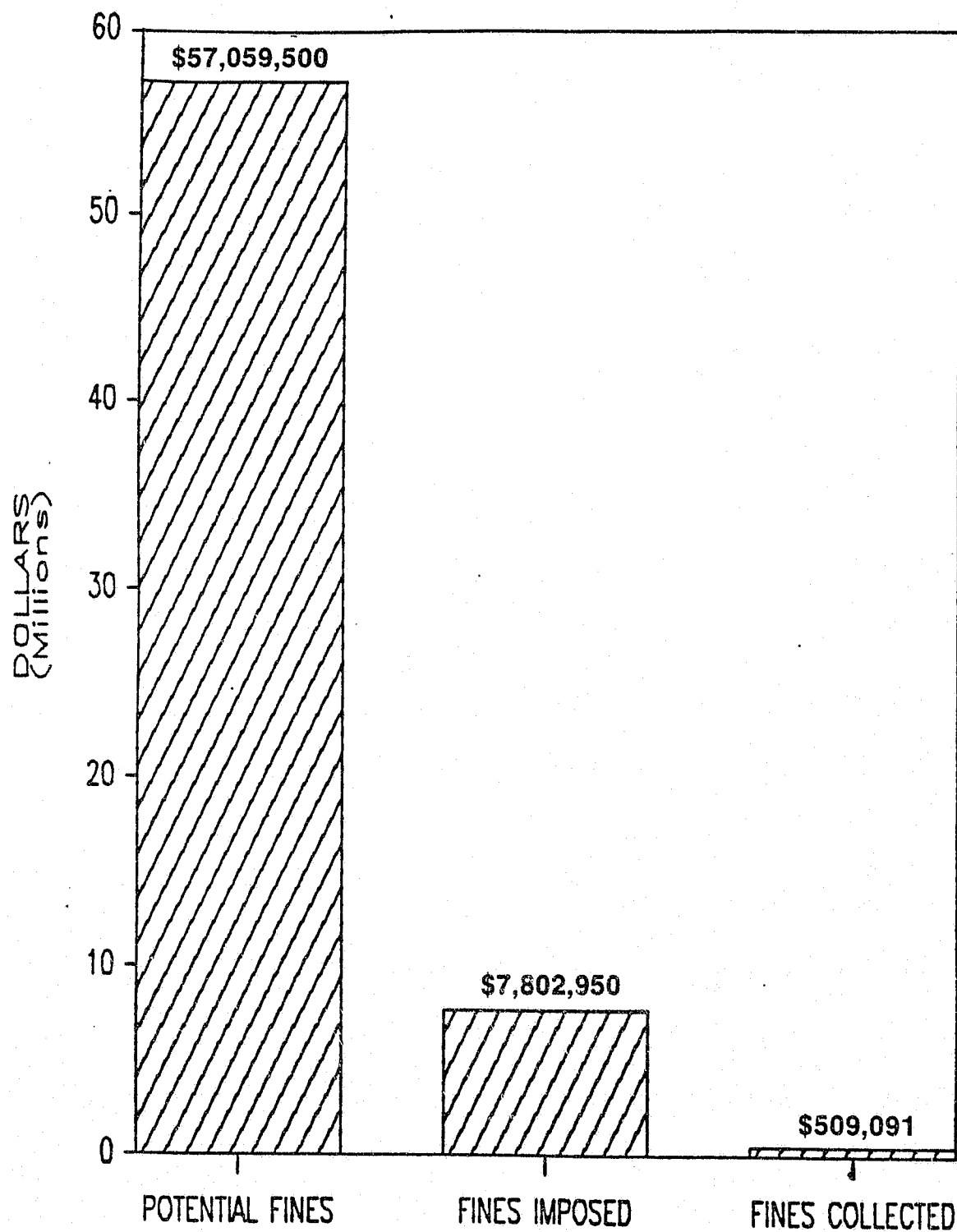
ACQUISITIONS

Table I.1:RANGE OF CRIMINAL FINES IMPOSED

<u>Amount of fine</u>	<u>Number of defendants</u>
No fine	1,127 ^a
\$1 to \$5,000	156
\$5,001 to \$10,000	54
\$10,001 to \$15,000	15
\$15,001 to \$20,000	9
\$20,001 to \$25,000	18
\$25,001 to \$30,000	3
\$30,001 to \$35,000	2
\$35,001 to \$40,000	2
\$40,001 to \$45,000	4
\$45,001 to \$50,000	15
\$50,001 to \$100,000	21
\$100,001 to \$150,000	8
\$150,001 to \$200,000	4
Over \$200,000	4
	<u>1,442</u>

^aIncludes two defendants convicted under statutes which do not authorize criminal fines to be imposed by the court.

Figure I.1:
Comparison of Potential Fines, Fines Imposed
and Fines Collected as of December 31, 1985



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