

Do People Value Punishment More than Rehabilitation ? A Study of the Willingness to Pay for Rehabilitation and Incarceration of Juvenile Offenders

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Purpose of Study

- We investigate public willingness to pay for rehabilitation and punishment of juvenile offenders.
- WTP is the amount an individual is willing to pay to acquire some good, service, or social outcome.
- WTP is obtained through Contingent Valuation Method—a survey-based approach for measuring monetary valuations for program benefits.

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Data

- Random sample of PA households (N=1,503) collected between March-August 2005
- 86.7% White
- 50% report income > \$50,000
- 50% report some college experience and above
- 59.7% Female
- Average Age 50.18 (range 18-94)
- Demographics closely match PA census

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Scenario 1

(Rehabilitation, 50% sample)

- Currently in Pennsylvania, juvenile offenders who commit serious crimes such as robbery are put in jail for about one year. Suppose Pennsylvania citizens were asked to approve the addition of a rehabilitation program to the sentence for these sorts of crimes. Similar programs have reduced youth crime by 30%. Youths in these programs are also more likely to graduate from high school and get jobs. If the change is approved, this new law would cost your household an additional \$100 per year in taxes.

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Scenario 2

(Punishment, 50% sample)

- Currently, in Pennsylvania juvenile offenders who commit serious crimes such as robbery are put in jail for about one year. Suppose Pennsylvanians were asked to vote on a change in the law that would increase the sentence for these sorts of crimes by one additional year, making the average length of jail time two years. The additional year will not only impose more punishment but also reduce youth crime by about 30% by keeping juvenile offenders off the street for another year. If the change is approved, this new law would cost your household an additional \$100 per year in taxes.

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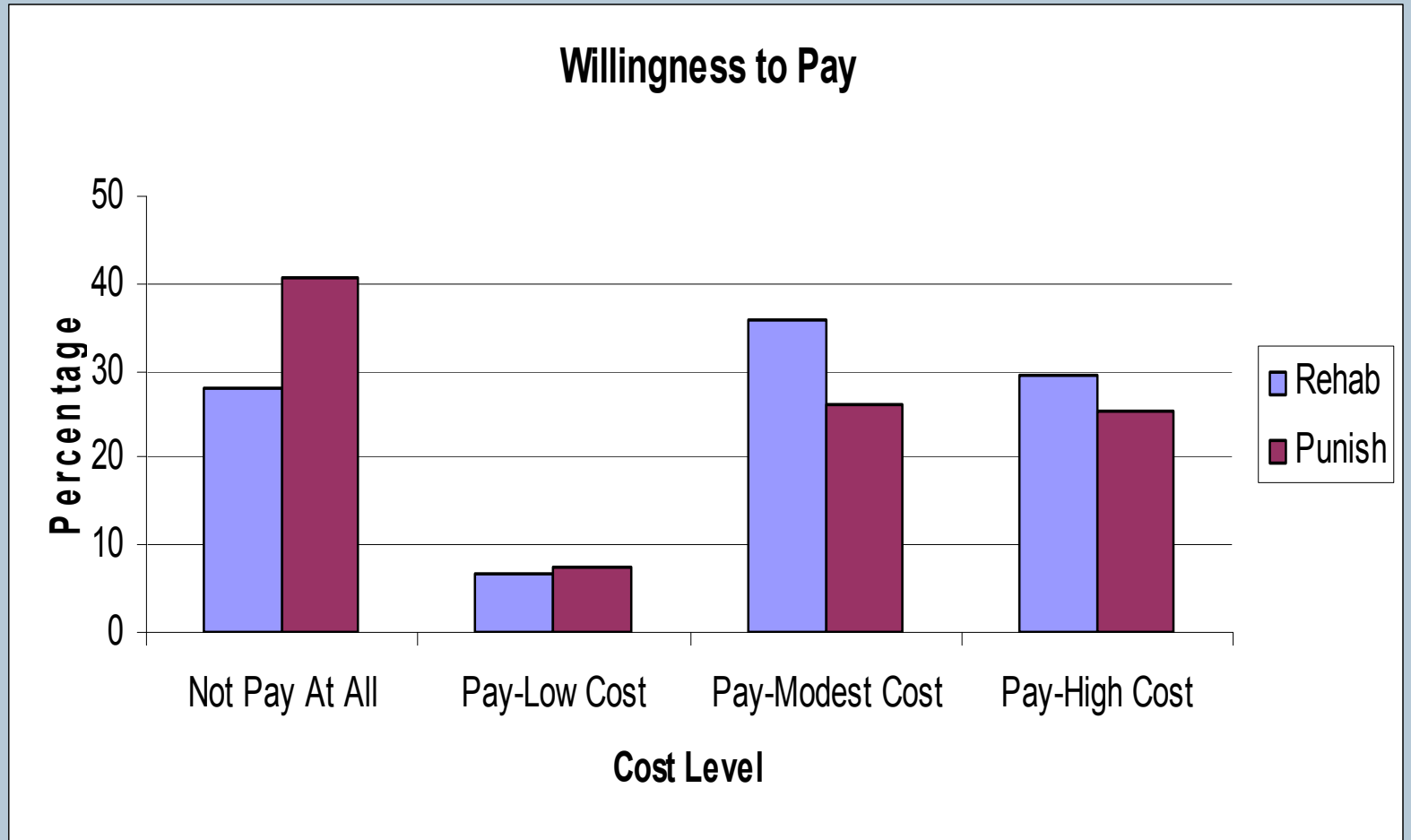
Follow-Up Questions For Each Scenario

- Would you be willing to pay the additional \$100 in taxes for this change in the law? (Y/N)
- If YES, would you be willing to pay \$200 for the same change? (Y/N)
- If NO, would you be willing to pay an additional \$50 for this change? (Y/N)

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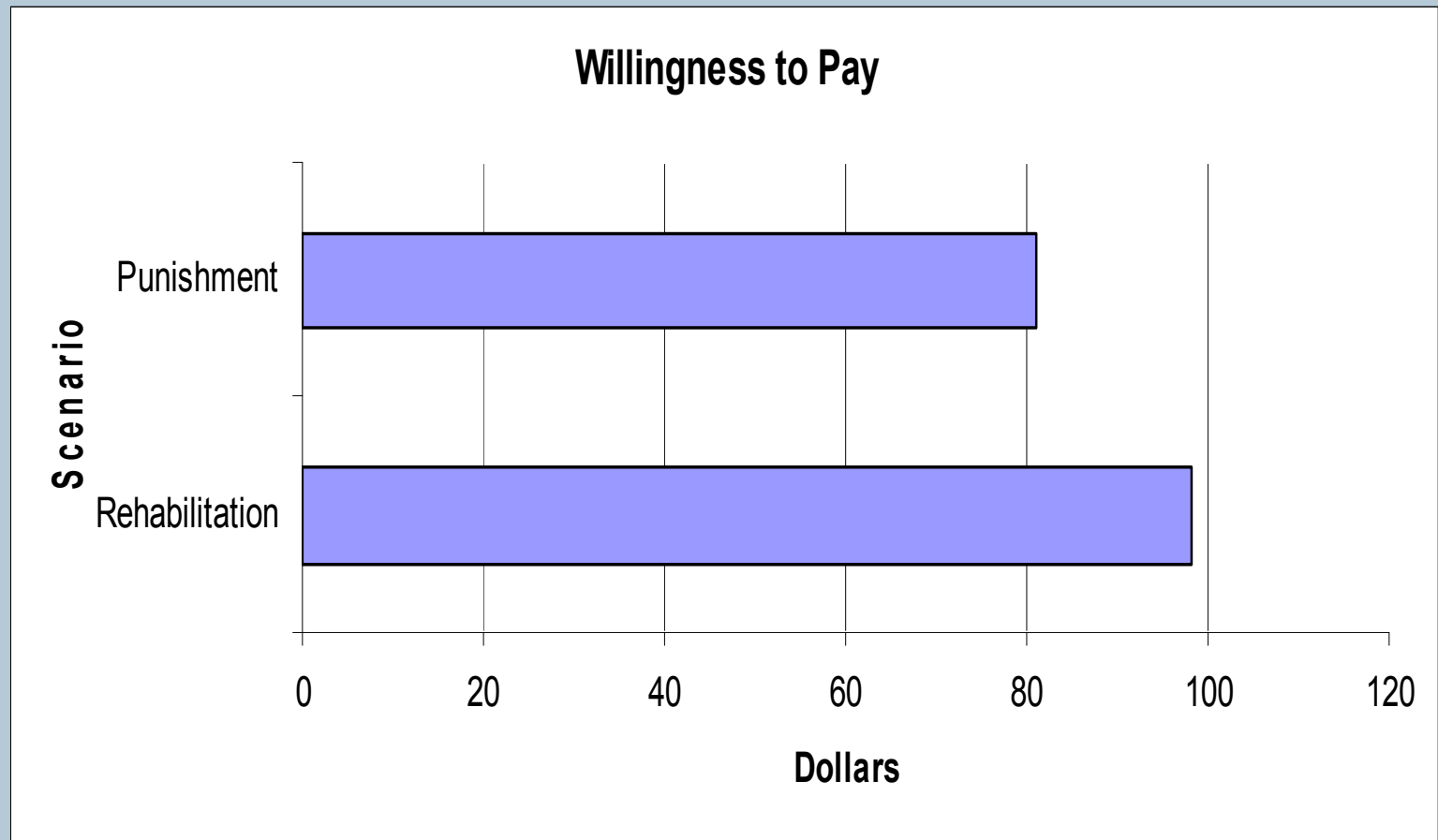
Percent of Respondents Willing to Pay



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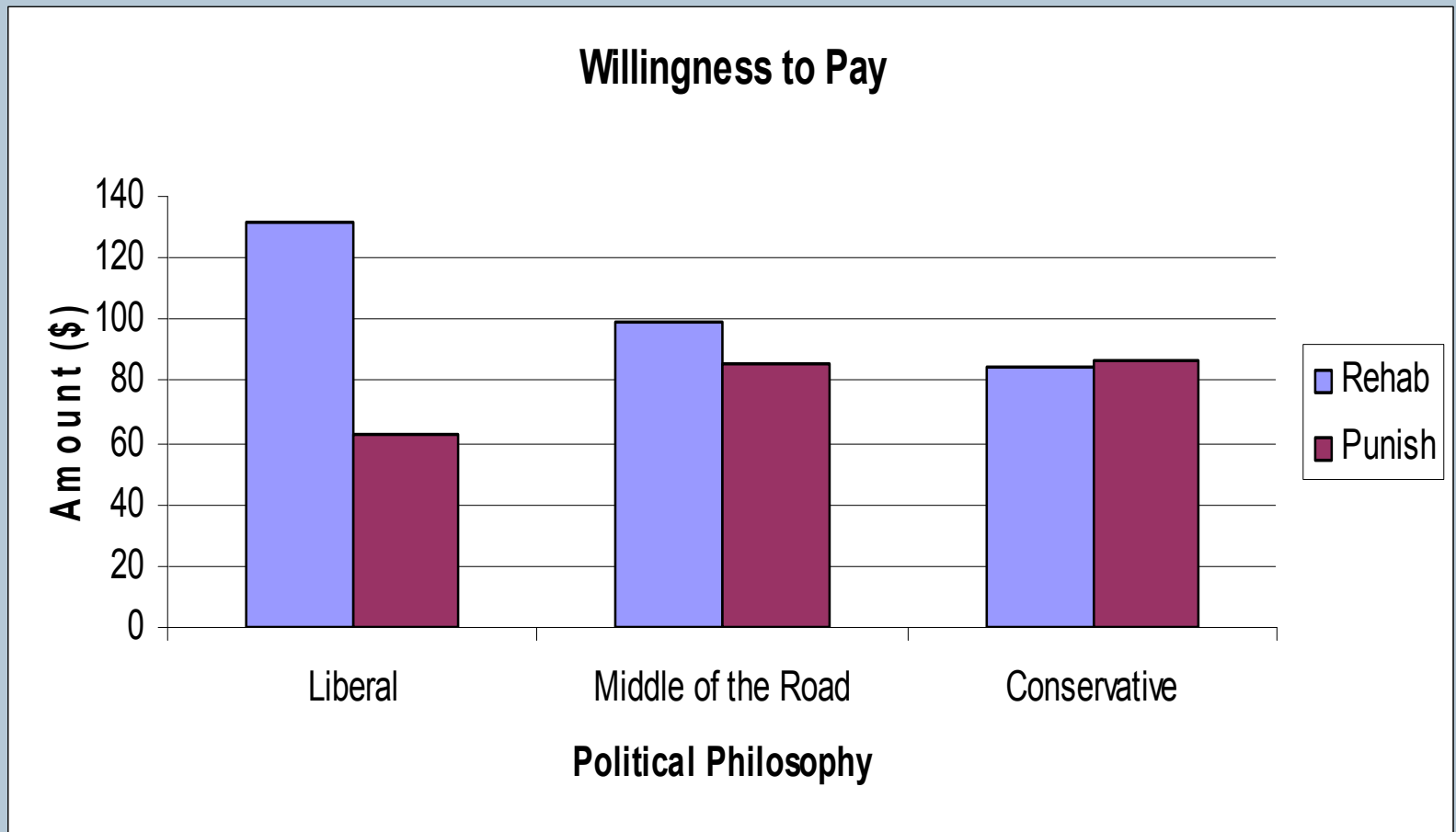
Average Willingness To Pay



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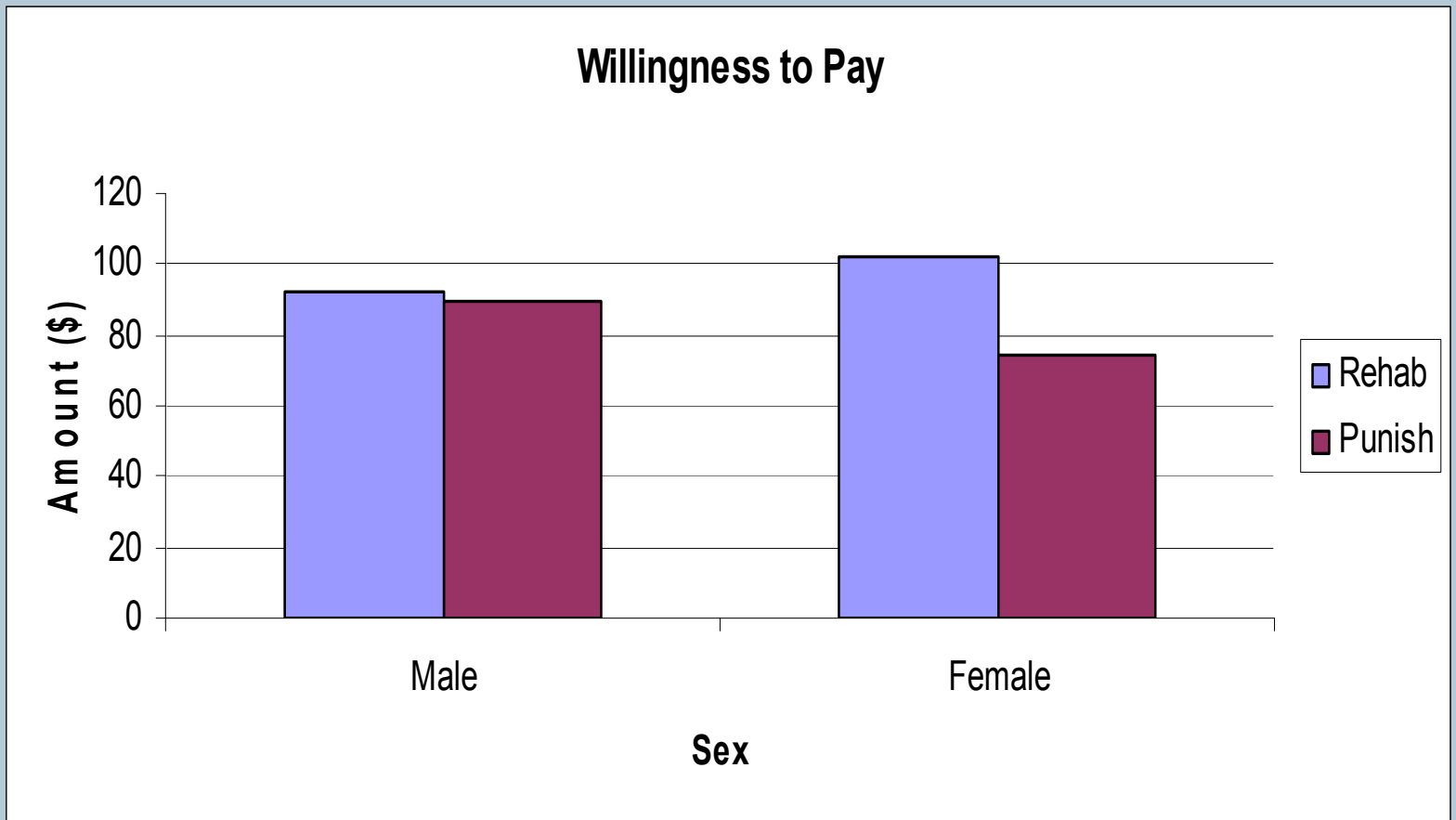
WTP & Political Philosophy



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WTP & Sex



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Cost/Benefit Calculations

Program	Avg WTP per household per year	Statewide WTP per year
Rehabilitation	\$98.1	\$468 mil.
Punishment (Longer Sentence)	\$80.97	\$387 mil.

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Rehabilitation Cost-Benefit Analysis

- Assume that the annual costs of rehabilitation program is \$10,000 per year per juvenile, and if 2,000 youths are served, this = \$20 mil. (2,000 youths*10,000).
- The net benefits of rehabilitation = \$448 mil. (= \$468-\$20)
- A benefit-cost ratio of 23.4 (= \$468/\$20).
- Thus, for every dollar you get 23.4 in benefits.

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Punishment Benefit-Cost Analysis

- Assume that the annual cost of incarceration is \$50,000 per year per juvenile, and if 2,000 youths are served, this = \$100 mil. (2000 youths * 50,000).
- The net benefits of punishment = \$287 mil. (= \$387-\$100)
- A benefit/cost ratio of 3.87 (\$387/\$100).
- Thus, for every one dollar, you get almost four dollars in benefits.

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Summary of Key Findings

- The typical household would be willing to pay, on average, \$98 for rehabilitation per year for programs that reduced specific crimes by 30% in their communities.
- This amount was, on average, more than they would be willing to pay for punishment (\$80).
- Take-home message: public is willing to pay as much as or more for crime reduction via rehabilitation compared to punishment.

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The Good News

- There are proven program strategies and models that consistently improve outcomes, when implemented correctly
- They cover full range of child development
- Several pay for themselves, many times over, in reduced corrections costs

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The Bad News

- Proven programs all require substantial training, ongoing quality assurance & monitoring.
- They only work when implemented with a high degree of fidelity
- At this time proven programs account for only a small percentage of the treatment & rehabilitation market

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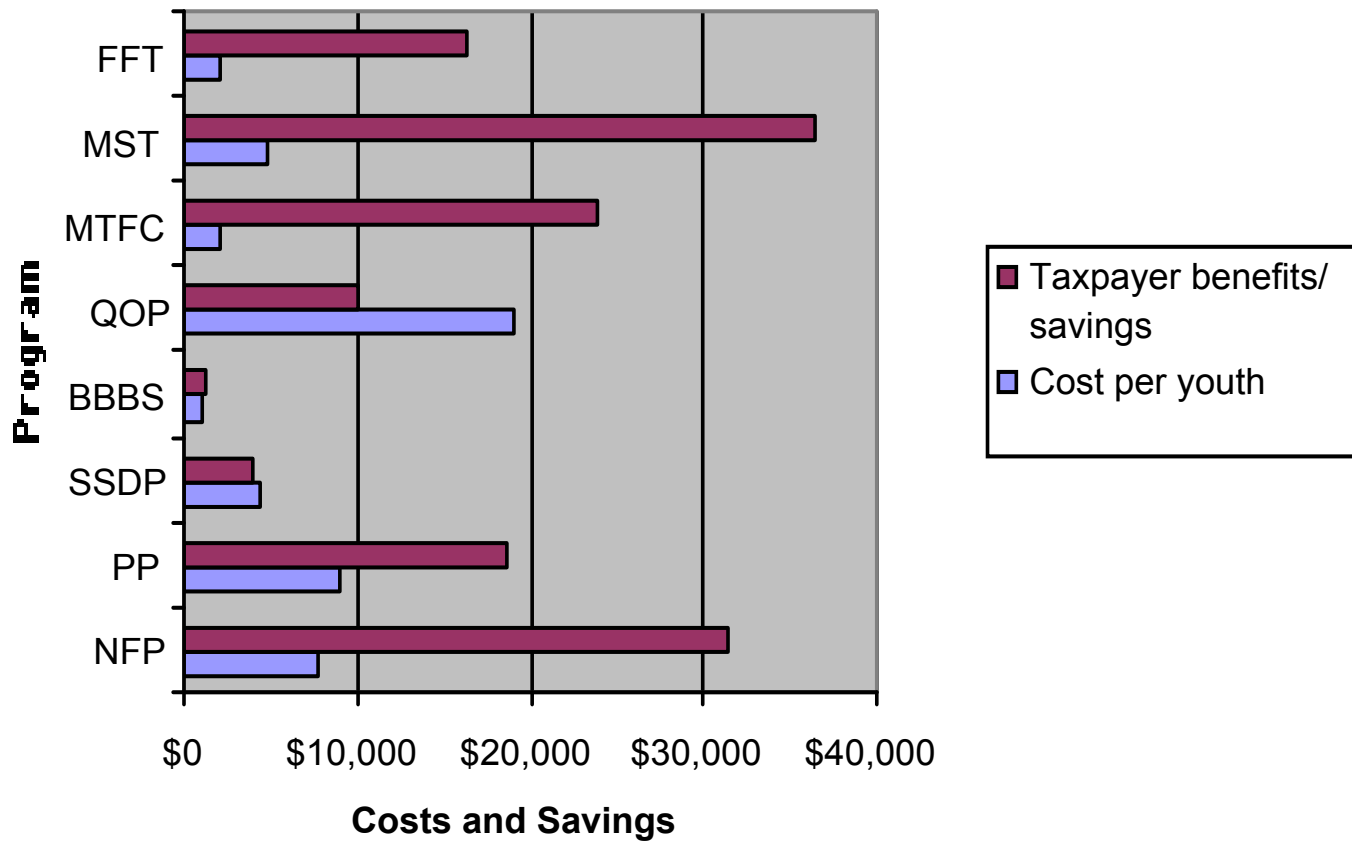
What Works

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Functional Family Therapy (FFT)
- Multi-systemic Therapy (MST)
- Treatment Foster Care (TFC)
- Nurse-Family Partnerships (NFP)
- Program Accountability (QC)

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Costs & Taxpayer Benefits by Program



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Changing Lives

Delinquency Prevention as Crime Control Policy

by

Peter Greenwood

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