

## Trump's Budget: Reorienting Spending to Serve Taxpayers

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The federal budget that has been unveiled by President Trump and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Mick Mulvaney is unprecedented in its generosity, sincere in its compassion and lavish with the currency that matters: This is truly the taxpayer's budget. It will not only balance the books, but go a long way to restoring the balance of federalism established by the Founders.

The budget adopts a premise that has been missing from White House budget proposals for too long. It views spending through the prism of being responsible and accountable to taxpayers. For the last 80 years there has been an unprecedented expansion of federal interference in health care, retirement, and poverty programs just to name a few. This heartless, inefficient, and statist approach has deeply harmed the revolutionary social contract formulated by our forefathers and ratified by our ancestors. The budget crafted by President Trump and Director Mulvaney challenges Americans to reach their full economic potential by moving budget and spending decisions outside the Beltway and to the states.

Big government has created a safety net full of philosophical and fiscal holes that cause havoc for our economy, and has written off entire segments of our society as powerless. The far left programs of President Franklin Roosevelt and its progeny have patronized the needy, insulted the states, and created a fiscal Potemkin village.

Examples of where the growth of federal spending have squeezed out the people and common sense are legion. A full list would fill pages, but some examples include:

- The war on poverty has cost north of \$20 trillion over 50 years. But the federal government is losing the war against poverty. As the Mercatus Center reported, “despite decades of a war on poverty that came with proliferating programs and ballooning budgets, the official poverty rate in the United States has stubbornly refused to break from its narrow historical range.”
- Food stamps have increased in scale and scope due to policy decisions, has failed to have a significant impact on hunger, has become a “way of life” and not a temporary safety net, does not boost the economy, and supports over 4 million food stamp recipients who are able bodied adults, according to the CATO Institute.
- The Environmental Protection Agency, which has become a propaganda machine for radical environmentalist, has created a “culture of complacency” for it's failures in oversight.

Programs that are the purview of the states have been taken over by the federal government. That means important decisions impacting poverty, the aged, health care, and retirement have been largely transferred from state capitols to Washington DC. That counter-constitutional move makes decisions in these areas less democratic and less likely to be challenged by the people. That is by design. The liberal order in our country relishes this arrangement: it allows the elites to substitute their perceived wisdom for the common sense of the electorate and local communities.

This democracy deficit perpetuated by the left and by the politically timid on the right, has led to an unprecedented federal fiscal debt. That debt of nearly \$20 trillion, amounts to just over \$60,000 per American, and over \$165,000 per taxpayer. That debt gets federal government programs that are ineffective, crowd out local solutions, and promote the gray pallor of diminished expectations. This budget takes a different approach and balances within 10 years. It tells Americans, “yes you can,” instead of the “federal government will do it for you.” Balance will make needed government programs sustainable, and help address the drag that the debt puts on the American economy.

The current unsafe net extolled by liberals is so riddled with holes that it cannot continue apace without dire economic consequences. The paternalistic ethos of big government has created a society in which Americans are increasingly led to believe that unless the federal government makes decisions for them they are powerless. More and more Americans are fed up that their destiny is in the hands of Congress and unelected, insulated bureaucrats. They are tired of the fact that reckless spending of their tax dollars by Washington DC is a practice that the establishment tells them simply has to be accepted.

The president’s budget says that Americans can do better, and should expect better. By strategically cutting spending on programs, President Trump is reminding the people that they should be controlling their destinies at the state and local levels. The long, detailed record of failed central planning by Washington DC is all the evidence needed to justify the prudent cuts in this budget.

It is easy for politicians inside the Beltway to purport to establish and maintain a social safety net and fund it. Typical politicians love to provide goods and services to their constituents. That makes the politicians appear to be effective and caring, and helps keep them in office while propelling their careers. And they do this while sustaining programs filled with waste, fraud, and abuse. These gifts to the people from their rulers serve to undermine our country by saddling the United States with massive debt. Incumbency has become the handmaiden of incompetent accounting.

For years, too much of this debt-creating federal spending has been operating on autopilot, without significant government oversight. The problem is so significant that 30% of federal spending, or \$310 billion, goes to programs that have no authorization from Congress. This is the ultimate in unaccountability from the federal government. Congress has been so careless with tax dollars, and taken the taxpayer so badly for granted, that they do not even bother to go through the motions of authorizing and overseeing large amounts of spending.

The Trump budget makes needed cuts to programs that Congress keeps funding without oversight. The legislative branch keeps punting on tough budget choices by looking the other way while they keep funding rolling. Director Mulvaney, a former member of the House, has made clear with this budget that the era of congressional budgetary evasion needs to come to a close. As he explained, ““If they’re not important enough for Congress to take up, are they really important for me to spend your money on? That’s a valid conversation and driving a large part of what we’re trying to do with the budget.””

Big spending politicians have created a level of debt that threatens our national security, and warps the relationship between the federal government and the people. This must end in order for the Republic to empower its citizens and live within its means. Federal spending must be focused, accountable, and conscious of the limits of central planning.

President Trump and OMB Director Mulvaney understand this. Their budget proposal is a bold plan to slash spending and bolster the Constitution. This is a budget of the people who are struggling against a federal government that takes a dim view of them and the states in which they live. It is a budget by a president who has a mandate from the people to change the unsustainable trajectory that federal spending and programs are on. And it is a budget for the people who have been sold a hodgepodge of hyperbolic disenfranchisement for decades.

Some have called this a skinny budget. More precisely, this is a liberty budget. It seeks to give back to the people their precious inheritance from the Revolutionary War: liberty. That liberty has been squandered for too long by those more interested in unsustainable spending than in sustainable governance, and more concerned with empty political wins rather than courageous legislative initiatives.

Critics of this budget will describe it as uncaring. In reality, this budget is one of the most caring spending blueprints in recent years. The lack of caring comes from the narrow minded who insist on not trusting the people and fueling the myth that big government is the only government.

The Donald, The Mick, and the people know better.

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