

Does The Federal Government Do The Budget “Backwards”?

What was our Founding Fathers’ attitude regarding debt? “We must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt.” Thomas Jefferson later remarked, “I wish it were possible to obtain a single amendment to our Constitution. I would be willing to depend on that alone for the reduction of the administration of our government; I mean an additional article taking from the Federal Government the power of borrowing.”

If you are like many Americans, you might have assumed that the federal budget process begins with a determination of what activities are lawfully authorized by the United States Constitution along with an analysis of what they will cost. And then, you might have assumed that these necessary and authorized activities would form the basis around which to organize personnel and material resources.

But this assumption would not be accurate.

The way to understand what is Constitutional (that is to say “legal”) spending, we need to go the Constitution and read Article 1, Section 8, which outlines what federal funds are authorized to utilize with defined conditions.

Here are a few things Congress is currently unconstitutional funding outside of the seventeen powers in Article 1, Sec. 8: The BATFE, FDA, Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Energy, National Parks, Wildlife Reserves, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

“Yes, I want a strong national defense,” Kentucky Senator Rand Paul tweeted ahead of the Senate vote on their recent budget bill. “I believe it’s actually the most important thing the

federal government does. But you have to ask yourself whether a \$20 trillion debt makes us a stronger country or a weaker country.”

The newest operating budget bill lifts the sequester spending caps on both defense and non-defense spending, setting top-line budget targets that will add at least \$298 billion to the deficit in the next two years.

In one way or another, the taxpayers of the United States that are alive today could never pay back our current debt. So the logical question is, “Who will do it?” The answer: Americans who are yet unborn will be entering the world with a major national debt hanging over them.

“I ran for office because I was very critical of President Obama’s trillion-dollar deficits,” Paul said on the Senate floor. “Now we have Republicans hand in hand with Democrats offering us trillion-dollar deficits.”

So while it appears both parties are to blame, the tragedy is that blame only leaves future generations, indebted slaves. It does not “secure blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity” as our founders did.

The solution for Americans is to follow the advice of founders like Thomas Jefferson who recognized, “The multiplication of public offices, increase of expense beyond income, growth and entailment of a public debt are indications soliciting the employment of the pruning knife.”

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