

Trump's Federal Budget Is VERY Libertarian

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Ideology shapes priorities, and largely determines what will be increased, and what will be decreased, in a government's annual budget. U.S. President Donald Trump's first proposed federal budget, released on March 15th, makes his ideology crystal clear.

Maybe it's because Trump [owes the libertarian Koch brothers his win of the White House](#), but for whatever reason, his proposed federal budget is, in terms of its spending-priorities, by far the closest-ever White House embodiment of their libertarian philosophy, and of traditional libertarianism going back to their heroes, libertarian economists such as Milton Friedman and Friedrich von Hayek — prioritizing, that is to say, as the first if not only *essential* government services (with government-spending thus being increased the most, or decreased the least, in the field of) defense and police functions, and furthermore urging that even the essential functions should be privatized as much as possible (favoring mercenaries, for example, instead of government soldiers).

Trump's budget is super-heavy on boosting military and police functions, and on shrinking all other federal departments, namely: State, Labor, EPA, Agriculture, Justice, HHS, Commerce, Education, Transportation, HUD, Energy, Treasury, and Interior.

The only Departments that get boosts in this budget are Defense (+10%), Homeland Security (+7%), and Veterans Affairs (+6%) — the three muscle-agencies, the “police-state” agencies that reflect government's essential coercive functions. And, a privatization gas-pedal is suddenly being pressed to the floor, in Transportation, Education, Health and Human Services, and, really, everywhere (such as cutting back on prison-construction, so as to increase the use of for-profit prisons). There will be more toll-roads with the profits going to stockholders, and less maintenance of existing pot-holed public highways and public transportation (the benefits of which go only to the public — no profits whatsoever). Private schools will benefit at the expense of public schools. This budget is the closest to the libertarians' dreams, of any President's, ever.

Here's how it came to be this way:

The Kochs didn't want Trump to be the Republican nominee — they had first favored Scott Walker, then were thinking of settling for Marco Rubio; but, after Trump did win, the Trump campaign recognized that without support from the traditional Republican Party — meaning RNC Chair Reince Priebus (the Party's traditionalists), and the Kochs (funding the Party's Tea Party wing) — there would be no way that Trump's ground-game operation working alone would be able to compete effectively against Hillary Clinton's operation, which was united with the Democratic Party's congressional ground-game operation. So, a deal was struck with Priebus, and with the Kochs, to also coordinate both the Republican congressional campaigns and the Republican Presidential campaigns; and Trump was floated into the

White House, really, on a broader unified conservative movement (unified actually by years of intense anti-Obama sentiment among Republicans) political wave, in which, as Matea Gold headlined in the Washington Post on 20 June 2016, [“The Kochs’ powerful operation isn’t aimed at helping Trump – but it might anyway”](#) — and that’s exactly what happened — it did help him, by bringing Republicans to the polls.

As a consequence of that — the support being provided both by the Republican National Committee (Reince Priebus) and the Tea Party activists (the Koch brothers) — journalist Alex Kotch was accurately headlining at Alternet on 10 January 2017, right before Trump’s inauguration, [“The Koch Brothers Are Smiling: The White House Will Be Packed With Some of Their Most Loyal Servants”](#). He opened:

“The Trump White House is going to be very, very Koch-y. During the 2016 presidential campaign, billionaire industrialists and Republican mega-donors Charles and David Koch made headlines by refusing to endorse a candidate. But ads in U.S. Senate races paid for by Koch-linked independent political groups hurt the image of Donald Trump’s foe, Hillary Clinton, whom they criticized while associating Democratic Senate candidates with her. And the massive ground game of the Kochs’ well-known political group, Americans for Prosperity, helped turn out thousands of Trump voters in battleground states. From the time Trump picked his vice presidential running mate, Koch favorite Mike Pence, the brothers’ influence on Trump World has grown ever stronger.”

However, what Kotch failed to notice, and actually got wrong there, was that his statement was misleading, that, “During the 2016 presidential campaign, billionaire industrialists and Republican mega-donors Charles and David Koch made headlines by refusing to endorse a candidate.” This assertion failed to distinguish between the primary phase of “the 2016 presidential campaign” and the general-election phase of it — the Trump v. Clinton phase. Prior to the general-election phase, the Kochs did have favorites, first Scott Walker, then Marco Rubio, but quickly realized that they couldn’t endorse either one, because those campaigners had no realistic chance of winning the Republican nomination. Trump never was the Kochs’ favorite, nor anywhere close to it. Therefore, the Kochs still did try, during that earlier phase, the primaries, to reduce Trump’s chances of winning the nomination; and, even after he won the nomination, the Kochs didn’t immediately jump aboard his bandwagon but instead actually preferred the Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton, over Trump. As I headlined on 21 July 2016, [“Koch Brothers Now Supporting Hillary Clinton”](#), and they temporarily punished one of the Kochs’ favorite U.S. Senators, Republican Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, for his so quickly endorsing Trump over Clinton. But that situation didn’t last long. Soon, the Kochs were back to funding Johnson, and (like Priebus) reached a deal with the Trump team, to fund the get-out-the-vote campaign that would help both the Republican congressional campaigns and the Trump campaign. This is how it came to be that we now have a solidly Republican government.

So, the *New York Times* headlined on March 16th, [“Who Wins and Loses in Trump’s Proposed Budget”](#), and gave a good summary of the Trump budget, a U.S. federal budget which, if enacted in this very Republican Congress, would be — at least in terms of its budget-priorities — like a dream come true for the Kochs. However, the *Times* doesn’t even mention the Kochs, nor libertarianism, there, but, like Alex Kotch otherwise explained fairly well, [“The Koch Brothers Are Smiling”](#), with budget-priorities like this.

Furthermore, the President whom Trump's voters were voting for is not the person whom they have now in the White House. As I had noted on March 14th, ["The Republican Healthcare Bill Is Very Free-Market, Libertarian"](#), and Trump himself said that he wanted it to be passed in Congress and to replace Obamacare. He said, ["I'm proud to support the replacement plan, released by the House of Representatives."](#) Saying that he's proud of it, means that he'd be happy for it to become Trumpcare. But it isn't what he had been promising for health care, at the time when he was campaigning against Hillary Clinton. At that time, [he told this to Scott Pelley of CBS "60 Minutes"](#):

Donald Trump: By the way. Everybody's got to be covered. This is an un-Republican thing for me to say because a lot of times they say, "No, no, the lower 25 percent that can't afford private." But —

Scott Pelley: Universal health care?

Donald Trump: I am going to take care of everybody. I don't care if it costs me votes or not. Everybody's going to be taken care of much better than they're taken care of now.

Scott Pelley: The uninsured person is going to be taken care of how?

Donald Trump: They're going to be taken care of. I would make a deal with existing hospitals to take care of people. And, you know what, if this is probably —

Scott Pelley: Make a deal? Who pays for it?

Donald Trump: — The government's gonna pay for it.

He wasn't parroting the Kochs there: he was instead parroting Bernie Sanders. But he's delivering Koch, not Sanders. He's delivering extreme conservatism, not any sort of progressivism. And yet, this is called 'democracy'? On healthcare — just like on some other important things — it's not that, at all, but instead bait-and-switch: deceit.

In short, then: Every progressive promise that Trump had made on the campaign trail was abandoned by him as soon as he won the November 8th election. Donald Trump is now a solidly Republican U.S. President, and his proposed budget makes it blatant (though some Republicans — and some Democrats — will object to its astronomical deficits). Whatever progressive mask that Mr. Trump was wearing while he was campaigning for the Presidency, is now completely off, and we see the stark reality, of a far-right U.S. President, and his stunningly libertarian proposed U.S. federal budget.

Incidentally, [the U.S. has by far the costliest healthcare per-capita in the world, but has the shortest life-expectancy of any major industrialized country](#): free-market healthcare is enormously wasteful as compared to socialized healthcare, but the profitability of healthcare firms is considerably higher in the U.S. than it is in any of its competing nations. In healthcare, education, and other social-services areas that are essential in order to have high well-being in a society, socialism is far more efficient (more cost-effective) than the free-market is.

The historical record shows that libertarianism, such as Trump pursues, increases profits and economic inequality, while it lowers a country's GDP, instead of raising it. People who have faith in the free-market don't want to know the data: libertarianism is a faith, just like

religions are. But reality is real, and myths are myths. The reality about Republican policies is always very bad, and Trump turns out to be very Republican (though perhaps not as much so as Vice President Pence is). Whereas the Democratic Party after FDR has a bad record, the Republican Party's record has been consistently far worse than the Democratic Party's record, throughout at least the past hundred years. So, the libertarian Trump Presidency will be enormously wasteful. It's massive deceit, which will produce massive waste.

Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).

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