



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on June 12, 2016

## Feds Collect Record Amount of Taxes in First Part of FY 2016, Deficit Balloons Ever Larger

The federal government has collected a record amount of money from Americans in the form of taxes in the first eight months of Fiscal Year 2016, which began last October 1. The new zenith of tax collection is an astronomical \$2.4 trillion.

Despite this high-water mark for the plunder of the producers of the country, the U.S. government's budget deficit continued swelling, reaching another record for the time period: \$407 billion, according to the Treasury Department's monthly statement of receipts and outlays of the federal government.



It is instructive to remember that despite branding themselves as the party of limited government and fiscal responsibility, Republicans have been in control of the House of Representatives — where revenue-raising bills must originate — since 2011, and of both the House and Senate since 2015, and the federal government is flabbier than ever.

For the period ending May 31, 2016, the federal government siphoned more wealth in the form of taxes than during any similar period in the history of the U.S. government, even after adjusting previous totals for inflation.

Of the \$2.14 trillion seized by the federal government, half of that amount — \$1.037 trillion — was taken from the income of individual American workers.

A quick study of the [Treasury Department's tax collection record](#) reveals that since 1998 tax revenues have increased over 30 percent.

In what amounts to an unconscionable demonstration of prodigality, the federal government managed to spend \$407 billion more than it brought in.

One need only imagine the financial devastation a family would suffer should those responsible for spending the family's money decided to run up a debt that would cripple their kids for generations.

Apparently, rules that everyone would agree would be fiscally sound for a family are disregarded by those in Washington, D.C.

The Treasury Department's financial disclosure displays a lack of fiscal fidelity to the Constitution that is astounding even to those aware of the absolute lack of accountability demanded by the people of their elected representatives.

For example, there are billions of dollars devoted to funding federal programs, policies, and agencies that are nowhere permitted in the Constitution.

Take, for instance, the Department of Education. During the first eight months of Fiscal Year 2016,



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more than \$5 billion was spent to support that unconstitutional agency of the executive branch.

Given the focus made recently on Common Core and the recently enacted Every Student Succeeds Act, it is illustrative to list the amount of tax money poured down this federal drain. Here's an incomplete list of Department of Education expenditures from October 1, 2015 to May 31, 2016:

- \$11.5 billion on the federal Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
- \$487 million on the federal office of English Language Acquisition
- \$19.7 billion on the federal office of Federal Student Aid
- \$2.85 billion on Education Improvement Programs
- \$365 million on the Institute of Education Sciences
- \$1.1 billion on the federal Office of Vocational and Adult Education

Billions of dollars spent on one federal education endeavor after another, none of which has delivered any demonstrable improvement in education and none of which is authorized by the Constitution.

Taking money from a person against that person's will — even if that money is used for an arguably good cause — is theft. And, if it is illegal for an individual to do something, it should be equally illegal for government to do that thing, as the government is nothing more than collective organization of the rights of individual members of the society.

This process of government-sponsored thievery is known as “legal plunder.”

As French political economist Frederic Bastiat explained in his 1850 pamphlet, *The Law*:

Man can live and satisfy his wants only by ceaseless labor; by the ceaseless application of his faculties to natural resources. This process is the origin of property.

But it is also true that a man may live and satisfy his wants by seizing and consuming the products of the labor of others. This process is the origin of plunder.

Speaking specifically of the use of plunder in the propping up of public education, Bastiat said:

You say: “There are persons who lack education,” and you turn to the law. But the law is not, in itself, a torch of learning which shines its light abroad. The law extends over a society where some persons have knowledge and others do not; where some citizens need to learn, and others can teach. In this matter of education, the law has only two alternatives: It can permit this transaction of teaching-and-learning to operate freely and without the use of force, or it can force human wills in this matter by taking from some of them enough to pay the teachers who are appointed by government to instruct others, without charge. But in this second case, the law commits legal plunder by violating liberty and property.

Why do politicians — Democrats and Republicans — think they should use the authority they have been given to take the property of others and use it for this or that social program? Bastiat has an explanation:

When a politician views society from the seclusion of his office, he is struck by the spectacle of the inequality that he sees. He deplores the deprivations which are the lot of so many of our brothers, deprivations which appear to be even sadder when contrasted with luxury and wealth.

Perhaps the politician should ask himself whether this state of affairs has not been caused by old



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conquests and lootings, and by more recent legal plunder. Perhaps he should consider this proposition: Since all persons seek well-being and perfection, would not a condition of justice be sufficient to cause the greatest efforts toward progress, and the greatest possible equality that is compatible with individual responsibility? Would not this be in accord with the concept of individual responsibility which God has willed in order that mankind may have the choice between vice and virtue, and the resulting punishment and reward?

But the politician never gives this a thought. His mind turns to organizations, combinations, and arrangements — legal or apparently legal. He attempts to remedy the evil by increasing and perpetuating the very thing that caused the evil in the first place: legal plunder. We have seen that justice is a negative concept. Is there even one of these positive legal actions that does not contain the principle of plunder?

Readers are encouraged to analyze the Treasury Department's financial disclosure statement for themselves. They will notice that the list of federal departments deducting money from the pockets of the American people is long and unbelievable:

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Energy
- Department of Health and Human Services (over \$1 billion was spent in the first eight months of FY 2016 investigating health care fraud and abuse. There'd be no abuse or fraud were there no federal health care programs to be defrauded or abused.)
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (nearly \$13 billion on rent subsidies)
- Department of the Interior
- Department of Labor
- Department of Transportation
- Environmental Protection Agency
- International Assistance Program (including over \$4 billion for the financing of foreign militaries)

There are billions in waste in all these departments and the financial health and political liberty of the American people are being thrown in in the transaction.

Finally, consider the wise warning of the Anti-Federalist writer Brutus:

This power, exercised without limitation, will introduce itself into every corner of the city, and country — It will wait upon the ladies at their toilet, and will not leave them in any of their domestic concerns; it will accompany them to the ball, the play, and the assembly; it will go with them when they visit, and will, on all occasions, sit beside them in their carriages, nor will it desert them even at church; it will enter the house of every gentleman, watch over his cellar, wait upon his cook in the kitchen, follow the servants into the parlor, preside over the table, and note down all he eats or drinks; it will attend him to his bed-chamber, and watch him while he sleeps; it will take cognizance of the professional man in his office, or his study; it will watch the merchant in the counting-house, or in his store; it will follow the mechanic to his shop, and in his work, and will haunt him in his family, and in his bed; it will be a constant companion of the industrious farmer in all his labour, it will be with him in the house, and in the field, observe the toil of his hands, and the sweat of his brow; it will penetrate into the most obscure cottage; and finally, it will light upon the head of every



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person in the United States. To all these different classes of people, and in all these circumstances, in which it will attend them, the language in which it will address them, will be GIVE! GIVE!



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