

Washington Never Returned To Pre-COVID Spending Levels

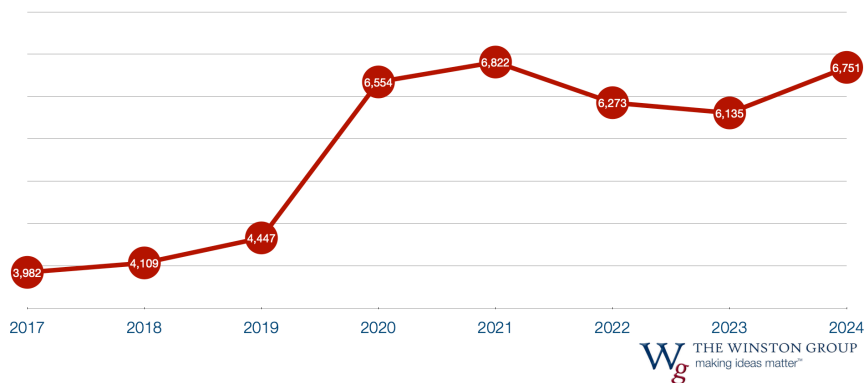
Washington is in an uproar over DOGE’s cost-cutting measures, but the inconvenient truth is that the federal government never returned to pre-COVID spending levels after the pandemic was over. Former President Biden announced COVID was over on [September 18, 2022](#). On April 10, 2023, he signed the [termination](#) of the COVID-19 national emergency declaration. But according to Congressional Budget Office figures, the federal government continued to spend at the same emergency levels as they started doing in 2020.

In 2020, because of the pandemic, the budget jumped 47% to over \$6.5 trillion as both Democrats and Republicans supported the need for emergency funding. That COVID funding was to sunset, as the country returned to normal.

But the spending levels of the emergency budget became the new normal under the Biden administration, resulting in the worst inflation in 40 years.

This chart shows the trajectory of spending starting in 2017 and culminating in over \$6.75 trillion in 2024. The CBO projects spending will top \$7 trillion in 2025.

Federal Government Spending (Outlays) 2017-2024
(in billions)



In the current policy debate over renewal of the TCJA tax provisions, Democrats have suddenly become concerned about fiscal responsibility. They make the case that extending the tax provisions will drive up the debt and deficit without acknowledging the record spending of the Biden era.

In a recent national survey (January 7-10, 1200 registered voters), we tested a series of supporting and opposing statements for renewing TCJA provisions. Among the strongest statements in favor of extending tax provisions was this: **Washington never returned to pre-COVID spending levels of less than 4.5 trillion a year. Starting in 2020, government spending levels every year have topped more than 6 trillion dollars. Until government spending is addressed, Washington shouldn’t be taking more money from taxpayers** (65-9 believe-do not believe).

This reality is not lost on the electorate. Two-thirds of the electorate (65%) believed this statement, with a similar percentage of independents (66%) and 56% of Democrats believing this. As one independent voter from our listening sessions described her reaction, *“I believe that more than anything because I can see it happening.”*

Have a good weekend.

David & Myra