

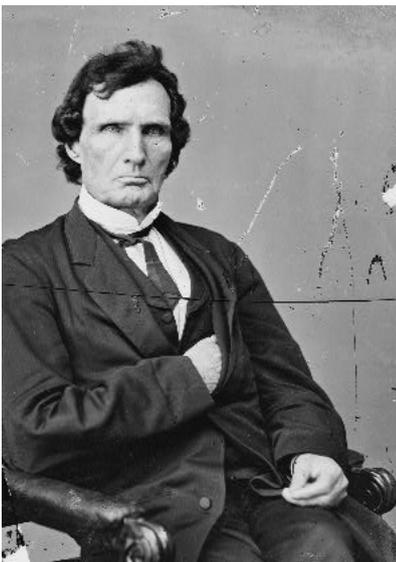
### Summary

*“No money shall be drawn from the treasury but in consequence of the appropriations made by law; and a regular statement of account of receipts and expenditures of all public money shall be published from time to time.”*

#### - U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 9, Clause 7

The U.S. Constitution grants Congress sole power of the purse. Congress has carried out this duty since the birth of the Republic; however over time the manner in which Congress has carried out this duty has evolved.

In 1789, a single appropriations bill, totaling \$639,000, supported all of our young nation’s needs. At that time, the appropriations function was the responsibility of the *Committee on Ways and Means*, which Congress established that same year.



By 1860, largely due to the massive cost of the Civil War, federal spending jumped from an average of \$60 million a year during peacetime to a high of \$1.3 billion in fiscal year 1865. Faced with this increase, and the workload that came with it, on March 2, 1865, the House of Representatives separated appropriating duties from the *Ways and Means Committee* and assigned them to the new Committee on Appropriations.

The Committee on Appropriations – originally comprised of six Republicans and three Democrats – was appointed its first members on December 11, 1865. Thaddeus Stevens (*Pictured Right*) of Pennsylvania was the first chair. The Committee took responsibility for ten bills, not including deficiency bills, and first reported general appropriations bills for fiscal year 1867, totaling \$357 million.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, authorization committees began to exert authority over Appropriations Committee duties. This decentralization of appropriations authority is often blamed for the growth in federal spending during this period. Following the outbreak of World War I and a new peak for fiscal spending of \$18.5 billion in 1919, Congress recognized the need to centralize appropriations authority in order to manage debt after the war. In June 1920, the House passed Resolution 324 re-concentrating control to the Committee on Appropriations and also expanding committee membership from the then 21 to 35.

The following year, in 1921, the *Budget and Accounting Act* created the Bureau of the Budget, (the forerunner of the current Office of Management and Budget) requiring, for the first time, the President to submit a budget request to Congress.

While the close of the war in Europe caused a precipitous decline in spending – falling to \$3 billion in 1927 – the dual challenge of the Great Depression and World War II and America's rise on the global stage would drastically alter the course of Federal spending and the duties of the committee.



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