

Why We Have So Many Shutdowns

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Congress keeps asserting its power over spending, but it has no means to hold itself accountable.

Something is fundamentally wrong with the U.S. budget process. The federal government is in the midst of its 21st shutdown in the past 43 years. It's time to ask how America got into this mess and how it can get out.

Until 1921 the U.S. had no formal budget process. The executive departments simply sent funding requests to the Treasury secretary, and he forwarded them to the House of Representatives for consideration. That year, however, Congress established the Bureau of the Budget, later known as the Office of Management...

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