



# Public Budgeting in the United States: The Cultural and Ideological Setting (Text and Teaching)

*Steven G. Koven*

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## **Public Budgeting in the United States: The Cultural and Ideological Setting (Text and Teaching)**

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Budgeting has long been considered a rational process using neutral tools of financial management, but this outlook fails to consider the outside influences on leaders' behavior. Steven G. Koven shows that political culture (moralistic, traditionalistic, individualistic) and ideological orientations (liberal vs. conservative) are at least as important as financial tools in shaping budgets.

Koven examines budget formation at the national, state, and local levels to demonstrate the strong influence of attitudes about how public money should be generated and spent. In addition to statistical data, the book includes recent case studies: the 1997 budget agreement; Governor George W. Bush's use of the budget process to advance a conservative policy agenda in the state of Texas; and Mayor Marion Barry's abuses of power in Washington, D.C.

Koven demonstrates that administrative principles are at best an incomplete guide for public officials and that budgeters must learn to interpret signals from the political environment.

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