

## FDR's View of Public Sector Unions



Perhaps the most important legacy of Roosevelt's New Deal is that of **big government** and **big government spending**. Prior to his taking office, the federal government's debt was less than \$20 billion. By 1940 the federal debt had ballooned

to \$43 billion. By today's standards this increase seems minor, but, nonetheless, it set a crucial precedent. Roosevelt introduced the nation to big government and deficit spending, and both would remain in place in the U.S. long after the New Deal and Roosevelt's Presidency.

**FDR's View of Public Sector Unions:** Despite being a Progressive Icon, Roosevelt was **very wary of public sector unions and collective bargaining between elected officials and government employees**. FDR realized that government employees have a major say as **voters** and **donors** as to who would be on the other side of the negotiating table. Private sector managers have a strong incentive to negotiate tough but fair deals with Labor. **Elected officials do not**. Rather, politicians have a strong incentive to **placate a very motivated special interest group (i.e., public sector labor unions)**. FDR foresaw the plethora of bad deals *(for taxpayers)*

politicians would strike with public sector union leaders for the remainder of the 20th Century and beyond.

For more, check out [\*\*The Common-Sense Guide to American History.\*\*](#)