

NEWS RELEASE

New Hampshire leads U.S. in economic freedom three years running; New York still the least-free state

December 14, 2017

For Immediate Release

TORONTO—For the third year in a row, New Hampshire—the Live Free or Die state—has the highest level of economic freedom among all U.S. states, finds a new report released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

The northeastern state scored 8.3 out of 10 in this year’s report, which measures government spending, taxation and labor market restrictions using data from 2015, the most recent year of available comparable data.

“The freest economies operate with comparatively less government interference, relying more on personal choice and markets to decide what’s produced, how it’s produced and how much is produced. As government imposes restrictions on these choices, there’s less economic freedom,” said Fred McMahon, the Dr. Michael A. Walker Research Chair in Economic Freedom at the Fraser Institute and co-author of this year’s *Economic Freedom of North America 2017*.

Rounding out the top five freest states are Florida and Texas (tied for 2nd), South Dakota (4th) and Tennessee (5th). For the third year in a row, New York was ranked least free (50th), followed by California (49th), New Mexico & West Virginia (tied for 47th), and Hawaii & Mississippi (tied for 45th).

The report also includes an additional all-government ranking, which adds federal government policy to the index and includes the 50 U.S. states, 32 Mexican states and 10 Canadian provinces.

Since 2004, the average score for U.S. states in the all-government index has fallen from 8.20 to 7.78 out of 10 in 2015, driven largely by changes at the federal level.

In the most-free states, the average per capita income in 2015 was seven per cent *above* the national average compared to roughly five per cent *below* the national average in the least-free states.

“The link between economic freedom and prosperity is clear—people who live in states that support comparatively low taxation, limited government and flexible labor markets have higher living standards and greater economic opportunity,” said Dean Stansel, economics professor at Southern Methodist University and co-author of the report.

The *Economic Freedom of North America* report, also co-authored by José Torra, the head of research at the Mexico City-based Caminos de la Libertad, is an offshoot of the Fraser Institute’s *Economic Freedom of the World* index, the result of more than a quarter century of work by more than 60 scholars including three Nobel laureates.

Detailed tables for each country and subnational jurisdiction can be found at www.fraserinstitute.org.

-30-

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