

NEWS RELEASE

Florida beats New Hampshire as most economically free state; New York the least-free for fourth year in a row

October 30, 2018
For Immediate Release

TORONTO—Florida has overtaken New Hampshire as the state with the highest level of economic freedom, finds a new report released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

The Sunshine State scored 7.87 out of 10 in this year’s report, beating out New Hampshire (2nd), which had ranked 1st for the past three years. The *Economic Freedom of North America* report measures government spending, taxation and labor market restrictions using data from 2016, 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 report co-author.

Rounding out the top five freest states are Texas (3rd), Tennessee (4th) and South Dakota (5th). For the fourth year in a row, New York was ranked least free (50th), followed by Kentucky (49th), West Virginia (48th), California (47th) and Alaska (46th).

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.

From 2004 to 2015, the average score for U.S. states in the all-government index fell from 8.24 to 7.78, but increased slightly to 7.9 out of 10 this year, driven largely by changes at the federal level.

In the most-free states, the average per capita income in 2016 was 7.3 per cent *above* the national average compared to roughly 10.5 per cent *below* the national average in the least-free states.

“The evidence is clear—lower levels of economic freedom lead to less prosperity, slower economic growth, less investment and fewer jobs and opportunities,” 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-

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Dean Stansel
Research Associate Professor, O’Neil Center for Global Markets and Freedom
Cox School of Business, Southern Methodist University
Tel: 214-768-3492
dean.b.stansel@gmail.com

Fred McMahon
Dr. Michael A. Walker Research Chair in Economic Freedom, Fraser Institute
Tel: (416) 363-6575 ext. 226
Mobile: (416) 727-7138
fred.mcmahon@fraserinstitute.org

[Follow the Fraser Institute on Twitter](#) | [Like us on Facebook](#)



The Fraser Institute is an independent Canadian public policy research and educational organization with offices in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal and ties to a global network of think-tanks in 87 countries. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for Canadians, their families and future generations by studying, measuring and broadly communicating the effects of government policies, entrepreneurship and choice on their well-being. To protect the Institute's independence, it does not accept grants from governments or contracts for research. Visit www.fraserinstitute.org

For more information, please contact:

Bryn Weese
Media Relations Specialist, Fraser Institute
(604) 688-0221 ext. 589
bryn.weese@fraserinstitute.org
@FraserInstitute