

# FEE Stories

## New Hampshire Is the Freest State in America. Here's Why

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When the CATO Institute put out their 2021 rankings for Economic and Social Freedom in the 50 States, there was one winner in both categories overall—New Hampshire.

The self-proclaimed “Free State” took both categories after being overtaken by Florida in 2020. But how did it get there? What led New Hampshire, a state surrounded by Blue States and metropolitan progressives, to become the most free according to a libertarian institute. The answer is very simple: the Free State Project.

Put simply, the Free State Project is a migration movement founded in 2001 by Jason Sorens with the goal of moving 20,000 libertarians into the state of New Hampshire to change the political climate. To date, the project has brought in more than 2,000 self-identified libertarians, and it has already led to great successes in the state. Although comprising only a small number of the legislators (forty or fifty of the 424 total legislators), Free Staters exist in all parties and control enough seats to act as the swing vote. Both parties need to cater to the libertarians and liberty lovers in order to get bills passed. As a result, the project has already had incredible success at implementing libertarian policies.

To give some examples, Free Staters have helped with the passage of constitutional carry, the expansion of school choice, and the decriminalization of recreational Marijuana use. New Hampshire also has widespread cryptocurrency use, no seatbelt laws for individuals over the age of 18, no mandatory car insurance (and subsequently low insurance costs), and a low overall tax burden, having abolished the state income tax, state sales tax, inheritance tax, and capital gains tax. The culture has also changed to heavily favor homeschooling and an accessible political scene. The state has even entertained a constitutional amendment for secession from the United States.

All these factors and more have led New Hampshire to be an example of what a libertarian state could look like. The Republican Party of New Hampshire has adopted many libertarian policies, and their motto has even become the famous message “Taxation is Theft.”

Governor Chris Sununu has been a controversial governor in the state for his initial lockdowns, but has redeemed himself at times in his work with Free Staters. What's more, the Granite State has passed a law that will limit the governor's authority in future public health emergencies.

While the rest of the country still fights against an Administration bent on implementing vaccine mandates and other "public health" measures, New Hampshire has safely left the controversy of COVID-19 behind and pushed for further freedom. Out of every state in the country, New Hampshire was the only state to not accept federal funding related to COVID-19 vaccination efforts. The Granite State has even passed bills that prohibit Governmental vaccine mandates and passports, a win for the bodily autonomy of its citizens.

The Free Staters are not without their opponents, of course. A group known as "Granite State Progress" has gone so far as to host seminars on the issue of the Free State Project. A Democratic Representative, Cynthia Chase, has stated "Free Staters are the single biggest threat the state is facing today." Endorsements from major libertarians have outnumbered the few Democrats in opposition, however. Former presidential candidate and Representative from Texas Ron Paul has endorsed the project. Additionally, 2012 & 2016 Libertarian presidential candidate Gary Johnson has thrown his weight behind the movement. Lew Rockwell, the Chair of the Ludwig Von Mises Institute, has also called the state the "northern capital of libertarianism."

Enthusiasm has erupted around the Free State Project, which was recently discussed on Tim Pool's popular show "TimcastIRL." Every year, more libertarians are moving to the state, as the need for freedom and liberty in the era of COVID has become apparent. Liberty is winning in New Hampshire.