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## It's a Less Free America

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Remember when you could say, “It's a free country” and actually mean it? Unfortunately, according to several reports on economic freedom, that old adage is becoming less accurate every year. Last month, [Canada's Fraser Institute reported](#) on America's declining rank in economic freedom. The libertarian Cato Institute, citing growing debt and regulation, also found the U.S. has continued to slip in the ranks of economically free nations.

Now, for the seventh year in a row, the U.S. has slipped on the Heritage Foundation's [Index of Economic Freedom](#) as well – falling out of the top 10 (to number 12) for the first time. The Index bases its ranking system on several factors, including government spending and property rights. Our scores regarding business freedom, monetary freedom, labor freedom and fiscal freedom are all headed south. Interestingly, the global average score of 60.3 was the highest (best) in the 20-year history of the Index.

While U.S. decline began during George W. Bush's second term, Obama's crippling economic policies and ever-growing government has made it significantly worse. This comes as no surprise to conservatives, who, three years after the “official recovery” of the Great Recession, see an environment increasingly unfriendly to business interests. We realize that while the term “recovery” may technically be correct, it means little to the millions of Americans still affected by high unemployment rates, higher taxes and health care uncertainty.

We need government to back off and allow Americans to pursue another direction. We need leaders who actually believe in the free market, rather than those who use it as a scapegoat for “income inequality” and as a justification for more regulation. According to the Index, it will take leaders with the determination to reform the tax and entitlement systems, and the guts to take on the proponents of Big Government, in order to turn things around.