



MO's Parson Ranked 13th among Nation's Governors

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(Jefferson City) -- Missouri Gov. Mike Parson's performance on economic policies have placed him among some of the top governors in the nation in a new report.

In a first-of-its-kind report, the American Legislative Exchange Council, a right-wing group of lawmakers and business people, ranked Parson 13th overall among states' governors. Report co-author Donna Arduin said Parson's corporate and personal income-tax cuts in 2018 prompted a ranking of fourth-best of any governor when it comes to tax policy.

"We have a four-star governor," she said, "and his handling of the economy going into this crisis was better than many states, and his handling of the economy through the crises."

However, the report noted that with a budget shortfall of more than 23%, Missouri needs to do more to prepare for the anticipated economic downturn.

Meanwhile, libertarian think tank Cato Institute gave Parson a "C" for state budget actions in its recent 2020 Fiscal Policy Report Card on America's governors. It said Parson announced hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts to planned spending as revenue projections have fallen.

Missouri's unemployment rate was nearly 5% in September, down from a high of 10% in April, near the beginning of the pandemic. Arduin said the findings can be used to determine where states can improve in terms of taxes and spending, economic competitiveness, and handling of federal CARES Act funding.

"Coming out of the crisis, these states can learn from each other," she said, "not just on the handling of the crisis, but the handling of their economies, and their fiscal policies that drive their economies."

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott was ranked the "best" governor in the report, followed by governors of Georgia and South Dakota. The governors of Alaska, New Jersey and Rhode Island got the bottom three rankings, respectively.