



Mount Rushmore State also Freedom State

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August 25, 2016

South Dakota scores high in the 2016 'Freedom in the 50 States' ranking by the Cato Institute.

The Libertarian think tank ranks the Mount Rushmore State number five overall in the nation for economic and personal freedom. However, there is a "vast gulf" between the state's economic and personal freedoms. Cato calls South Dakota the quintessential "deep red" state.

Cato calls the state's fiscal policy excellent with one of the lowest tax burdens in the nation and it enjoys regulatory policies above the average.

The Libertarian group slammed the state for "draconian" criminal justice policies with victimless crime arrest rates above national norms. South Dakota also took a hit for tough marijuana laws and its stance on same-sex marriage.

New Hampshire tops the annual ranking in 2016 and at the bottom - the least free state in the country - sits New York State. Cato says New York's local tax burden is twice that of the average state.