

NEW YORK

Libertarian Group: Your Local Public Hospital Is Stealing Your Freedom

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August 17, 2016

Earlier this week, the Cato Institute released its “Freedom in the 50 States” report. As the name indicates, the project is an effort to rank the 50 states from most to least free. The criteria are here, and they cover a wide range of issues, from marijuana laws to drunken-driving enforcement to asset-forfeiture practices. (The site claims you “can also apply your own weights to these variables here,” but *here* isn’t linked — where’s the freedom, Cato?)

The freest state of them all, it turns out, is New Hampshire. Which makes sense given that the state references freedom right there in its motto. But just a bit to the southwest is the *least* free state: New York. This is true. Ask any New Yorker and they will tell you there is no freedom here. It’s gone. Luckily, Cato is on the case with some very specific policy prescriptions to help lift the Bureaucrats’ Unfree Republik of the Hudson up to the level of, say, Oklahoma (No. 5) or even — fingers crossed — New Hampshire itself.

Not surprisingly, given Cato’s libertarian orientation, the recommendations largely involve having the government cut spending on a bunch of things. A partial list of the cuts we must embrace if we are ever to regain our precious, precious freedom.

1. Hospitals

I am sick and tired of government bureaucrats (paramedics) interfering with my personal choices (taking me to a nearby hospital after I choke on a pizza bagel).

2. Housing

There is a NOFX song called “Freedom Is a Shopping Cart” in which an “anarchist slash prostitute” turns his back on adult expectations and finds an irresistible sense of freedom as a homeless person. NOFX is a punk-rock band with a penchant for anti-capitalist messages. Cato is a major D.C. think tank.

3. Libraries

Having just paid an overdue fine to the Brooklyn library system, I can personally vouch for the fact that libraries just take and take and take our freedom, providing absolutely nothing in return other than free books.

4. Sanitation and sewerage

If chamber pots were good enough for the Founders, who were the freest men of them all, why do we have to be so snooty about what we do with our waste?

5. Public transit

Riding the L train during rush hour is, in fact, the very antithesis of freedom. Luckily, Brooklyn is about to break free from its chains of bondage for a long time.

Just a friendly reminder that libertarianism remains an extremely influential ideology within U.S. policymaking.