



ACCURACY
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United States Falls in ‘Human Freedom Index’ Rankings

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April 10, 2017,

America’s bureaucratic largesse as well as its erosion of property rights and rule of law are affecting the country’s Human Freedom Index, while Hong Kong remains the top-ranked country with even Communist China looming overhead. The U.S. dropped to twenty-third in the world from nineteenth, while Switzerland, New Zealand, Ireland and Denmark round out the top six countries in the index. Canada, America’s northern neighbor, ranks sixth in the world and Mexico ranks seventy-seventh.

The Cato Institute released its jointly-produced ‘Human Freedom Index’ with other think tanks from across the world, ranging from Canada’s Fraser Institute to Switzerland’s Liberales Institut for the second consecutive year. The index measures the following:

- Rule of Law
- Security and Safety (i.e homicides, terrorism, women security)
- Movement [of people]
- Religion
- Association (i.e. freedom of assembly)
- Expression and information (i.e. freedom of the press)
- Relationships (i.e. divorce, parental rights)
- Size of Government
- Legal System and Property Rights
- Sound Money (i.e. inflation)
- Freedom to Trade International (i.e. tariffs)

- Regulation

A glaring omission in the index's introduction is that of Hong Kong's size or scale when compared to other modernized economies. The city has a higher ranking in the size of government, and other economic freedom indicators, but size should play a part in the explanation of why it ranks as the top country in the index. Hong Kong has a population of 7 million people, but that figure pales in comparison to the U.S.'s 318 million, United Kingdom's 64 million and Canada's 35 million people. It would be wise for the authors to take population and size of economies into consideration in the publication of next year's report.

Interestingly enough, the Heritage Foundation ranked Hong Kong as the top country in its Index for Economic Freedom for similar reasons as the Human Freedom Index, such as the lower tax rate and less government regulation. Switzerland ranks fourth and New Zealand third in the Heritage index, with the U.S. ranking seventeenth.