



New Yorkers fleeing to Florida need to leave their terrible blue state policies behind as well

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Back in the day, my native New York State feasted on the iconic I♥NY ad campaign, enticing Americans to drop in and spend their dollars in the Big Apple.

But now, we're being treated to the spectacle of the state's governor selling... not New York, but Florida!

In a recent press conference, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo blamed a \$2.3 billion budget deficit in New York on the compounding effect of federal tax reform on the state's sky-high taxes. And according to the Wall Street Journal, "(Cuomo) specifically mentioned Florida as an attractive option for New Yorkers who are unhappy with the change in the tax law."

The Journal article also points out, "Preliminary data show a jump in Florida home purchases by buyers from high-tax states."

Governor Cuomo's Sunshine State promo follows on the heels of a Census Bureau report late last year detailing the states that lost residents due to high taxes, overregulation and dwindling opportunities. Leading the list? New York. And it wasn't just last year – 1 million people have packed and left that once-mighty jurisdiction since 2010.

And what jurisdiction did the Census folks say benefits the most from domestic "in-migration? You guessed it. Florida, where "sunny" refers not only to our climate, but also to our low-tax, business-friendly welcome to asylum seekers from Big Government states like New York and New Jersey. Two decades of sunny conservative state leadership has made Florida the nation's freest state, according to the Cato Institute.

For us freedom-loving Floridians, however, there's a rub. It seems all too many blue-state refugees, having found haven from tax-spend-regulate oppressors, turn around and import the very same blue-state politics that caused them to flee in the first place.

Take Virginia, where escapees from neighboring high-tax Maryland helped push a once reliably conservative state markedly leftwards. Republicans have not won a statewide election there since 2009, and barely hung on to their majority in the House of Delegates after a 15-seat bloodbath in 2017. Right on cue, Democratic Governor Ralph Northam (of recent blackface fame) recently requested \$1.2 billion in new taxes. Unsurprisingly, migration to the Old Dominion state of Virginia reversed with the election of the Democratic ticket in 2013.

We must heed the lesson Governor Cuomo seems to have absorbed, “Tax the rich, tax the rich, tax the rich. The rich leave, and now what do you do?”

Florida’s near-miss in the recent midterms – where Republican gubernatorial candidate Ron DeSantis edged Democrat Andrew Gillum by a breathtakingly slim margin – shows just how quickly things can change.

The Socialist fantasies of Gillum would have killed the goose that laid the golden egg of our prosperity – and put an end to two decades of pro-growth Republican policies which has made Florida a beacon for our nearly 21 million residents.

It's sunny Florida's low taxes and reasonable regulatory environment that attract businesses here. Florida ranks 6th among states for new business creation. Gillum, the Democratic nominee, on the other hand, proposed a \$1 billion tax increase that would have smothered the flames of entrepreneurship.

Another stated goal of Gillum’s was to gut the state’s highly successful school choice policies, virtually destroying the power of Florida parents to decide the best educational opportunities for their own children. Interestingly, this would have particularly hurt the more than 300,000 minority students in choice programs throughout the state.

Unlike the federal government, Florida balances its budget and does so without an income tax. You can keep your big progressive government in New York, thank you very much.

For sure, Florida’s recent history of razor-close elections – and election controversy – is the stuff of legend. But a 2016 report indicates that jobs have been the #1 attraction for re-locators, and before the recent surge of wealthy elites, economic analyses implied that the working class – fertile ground for further Democratic inroads – has accounted for much of our in-migration.

Which means we must redouble efforts to convince new arrivals that the only way to keep the jobs that brought them here is to maintain the economic juggernaut that generated them.

Not to mention heeding the lesson Governor Cuomo seems to have absorbed, based on another lament at his presser: “Tax the rich, tax the rich, tax the rich. The rich leave, and now what do you do?”

My message to transplanted New Yorkers as well other transplants? Leave your blue-state perspectives at the door and vote for low-tax, pro-business government not only with your feet – but also at the ballot box.