



## The least-free state in the country: NY dead last in personal, economic freedoms

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When it comes to personal and economic freedoms, New York ranks dead last among the 50 states, according to a study by the [Cato Institute](#).

The ranking isn't all that shocking to those who have followed this report by the Cato Institute before—New York consistently ranks last each year. "We score all 50 states on over 200 policies encompassing fiscal policy, regulatory policy, and personal freedom," the institute explained. "We weight public policies according to the estimated costs that government restrictions on freedom impose on their victims."

Here's what the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank funded by the Koch brothers, said about New York's ranking:

*"New York is again the least free state in the country. Its huge, glaring weakness is fiscal policy. If New York were to adopt a fiscal regime closer to that of California, New Jersey, or Connecticut, its overall economic freedom score would be close to theirs. As it is, New York looks set to remain the least free state for many years to come."*

Here are some more stats that put New York's ranking into perspective, from Cato:

- New York's local tax burden is twice that of the average state: 7.8 percent of income in Fiscal Year 2012.
- However, New Yorkers have ample choice in local government: 4.1 competing jurisdictions per 100 square miles of private land
- The state tax burden, at a projected 6.7 percent of income in FY 2015, is also higher than the national average.

- The government spends almost four times what the average state does on subsidies to business. Debt is the highest in the country at 31.9 percent of income

- Government employment, however, is slightly lower than average and has come down since 2010

Cato said that to improve its ranking, New York should make a number of policy recommendations, including cut spending on hospitals, abolish rent control and slash tobacco taxes.