

## How “Free” Is Your State? New Report Reveals

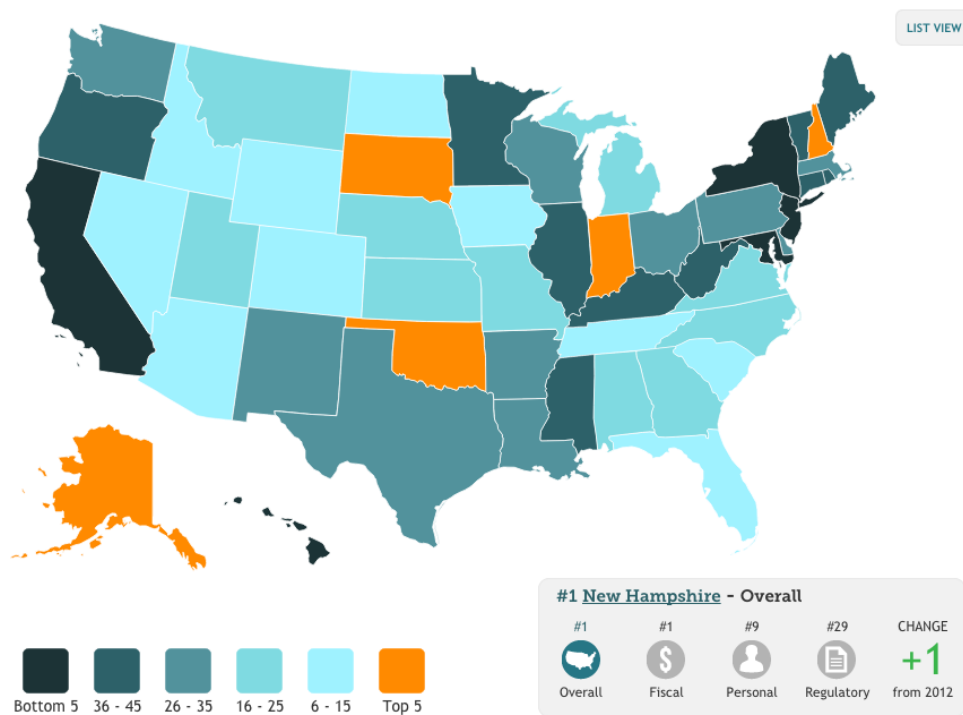
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When moving to a new state, a litany of questions can cross one’s mind.

Which states are cool with smoking marijuana? Which states are good for responsible gun-owners? Which states best protect your home and property? What about pets? Which states have the highest or lowest incarceration rates? Which states have the least amount of regulations?

Or, if you wish to boil all these queries down, a single question emerges: which states interferes with my life the least?

The answer to that question, and many others, can be found in the Cato Institute’s 2016 edition of *Freedom in the 50 States*, an index that ranks American states based on how their policies promote freedom in the fiscal, regulatory and personal realms.



*Source: Cato Institute*

Now in its fourth iteration, the freedom index is the result of countless statistics, attributes and trends present in states across the nation – delving into areas as boring as workers’ compensation and insurance, to more interesting topics like prostitution and mixed-martial arts.

The index looks at freedom not as a vague notion, but as a specific and measurable attribute.

“We ground our conception of freedom on an individual rights framework,” the index notes. “In our view, individuals should be allowed to dispose of their lives, liberties and property as they see fit, so long as they do not infringe on the rights of others.”

The index does not, however, look at issues of national security or immigration across states, given the federal government role in those matters. Touchy issues like abortion are also subject to be toggled on or off, depending upon a person’s perspective.

But overall, the index allows users to have a holistic view of just what they can expect when moving to a new state, or may even serve to motivate one to head out toward more free pastures.

Explore the full index [here](#) to see how your state compares.