



The CATO Institute's Report On Fiscal Responsibility Gives John Bel Edwards An "F"...

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...so you'll know it's not just Louisiana's Republicans who have noticed what an unmitigatedly terrible job Edwards has done as governor with the state's fiscal situation.

From [CATO's 2018 fiscal report card on America's governors](#), here's the writeup on Edwards...

Edwards has spent much of his two and a half years in office pushing for higher taxes. Facing a budget shortfall in 2016, Edwards embraced a slew of tax increases. He signed into law higher taxes on alcohol, cigarettes, health care providers, vehicle rentals, business inventories, and other items, in addition to increasing corporate franchise taxes and broadening the sales tax base.

The 2016 deal also included a "temporary" increase in the sales tax rate from 4 percent to 5 percent. However, when that hike was set to expire in 2018, Edwards and the legislature decided to retain about half of the increase for another seven years, so the state's sales tax rate currently sits at 4.45 percent. Louisiana's government will also receive a revenue infusion of more than \$200 million a year because the state's tax code automatically conformed to the 2017 federal law.

In 2017, Edwards proposed a gross receipts tax which would have raised more than \$400 million per year, but the state legislature quickly shot down the bill.

The governors were scored on seven different metrics leading to a number and letter grade (Edwards was given a 37, which tied him for 5th from the bottom among the nation's governors in fiscal responsibility). The seven variables were...

Spending Variables

1. Average annual percent change in per capita general fund spending proposed by the governor
2. Average annual percent change in actual per capita general fund spending.

Revenue Variable

3. Average annual dollar value of proposed, enacted, and vetoed tax changes. This variable is measured by the reported estimates of the annual dollar effects of tax changes as a percentage of a state's total tax revenues. This is an important variable, and it is compiled from many news articles, budget documents, and reports.

Tax Rate Variables

4. Change in the top personal income tax rate approved by the governor
5. Change in the top corporate income tax rate approved by the governor

6. Change in the general sales tax rate approved by the governor
7. Change in the cigarette tax rate approved by the governor.

So as you'll notice, you don't really get credit for fiscal responsibility if you're a tax-and-spend leftist who's reined in by a Republican legislature, as Edwards to some extent is.

The worst governor in the country for fiscal responsibility, according to CATO, is Washington's Jay Inslee – who naturally is talking about running for president. Inslee racked up a 23 on CATO's report card. One Republican – Democrat turncoat Jim Justice of West Virginia – received an "F" on the report card, earning a 35. The "A" governors were Susanna Martinez of New Mexico (73), Henry McMaster of South Carolina (69), Doug Burgum of North Dakota (68), Paul LePage of Maine (67) and Texas' Greg Abbott (65) – all Republicans. Steve Bullock of Montana, who earned a "C" with a 54 score, was the highest-ranking Democrat. That's pathetic.

What else is pathetic is that New York's Andrew Cuomo, who is busily lamenting a \$2.3 billion budget deficit after chasing capital out of his state in a whirlwind of stupid tax and fiscal policy (when not celebrating the legalization of infanticide), managed a 49 score.

Which means John Bel Edwards was 14 points worse than Andrew Cuomo in this report card.

That's how bad this is. Louisiana's voters are going to need to address it this fall, or the 55,000 more people who have left the state than have moved in over the past two years will be but a trickle compared to the flood of outmigration which is coming.