



Slipping a spot: Keep an eye on local spending

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Florida slipped past New Hampshire for the top spot in the latest ranking of Freedom in the 50 States from the Cato Institute.

The report's authors point to local property taxes, which have risen from 3.9 percent to 5.3 percent of average household income over the past decade.

Tax-and-spenders may seize on this to propose more state spending to cover local expenses, but they would be missing the point. Local property taxes rise with local spending.

Other states, including Maine and New Jersey, have imposed broadbased taxes on their citizens with the promise of local property tax relief. But all they did was create another pot of money for politicians to spend. Local property taxes didn't drop.

Even if we were to indulge the liberal fantasy that shifting the tax burden to Concord wouldn't increase spending, it would still do nothing to lower New Hampshire's overall tax burden. That still remains second-lowest in the country.

Taxpayers have more control over their local property tax rates than the budgets passed in Concord or Washington. Relying on property taxes helps keep overall government spending in check.

Voters can help New Hampshire take back its top spot by voting to control local spending.