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NATE FELTMAN: Indiana: Flyover state or freedom state?

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Indiana is a flyover state. Ever heard that insult before? That is what some on the coasts like to call all of us who are not living on either coast. In other words, if you don't live in New York or California (or nearby), you can't be very smart, worldly, cultured, innovative or progressive. Who would want to live in Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania or Wisconsin, anyway?

The most recent insult came from Bill Maher, host of HBO's "Real Time," when discussing Amazon's decision to build its HQ2 on the East Coast, in New York and suburban D.C. Maher said: "The flyover states have become the passed-over states. That's why red state voters are so pissed off. They don't hate us; they want to be us."

Of course, Maher's commentary is supposed to be funny. And Maher can be funny. But his line, "They don't hate us; they want to be us" is a window into the minds of liberal elites. Remember 2008 presidential candidate Barack Obama derogatorily describing the working class as voters who "cling to guns or religion"? And 2016 presidential candidate Hillary Clinton calling half of Trump's supporters a "basket of deplorables"? Obama's "clingers" and Clinton's "deplorables" both are citizens of Maher's flyover states.

So what did the great coastal state of New York do for Amazon? It drove the company out of town before it could even break ground. The latest liberal star, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, whose NYC constituents were sure to benefit from Amazon's promised 25,000 jobs with an average wage of \$150,000, decided New York would be better off without Amazon. After Amazon canceled its New York investment, she celebrated by tweeting how anything is possible now that New Yorkers defeated Amazon and the power of the richest man in the world, Jeff Bezos.

How can someone who advocates for a guaranteed minimum living wage fight to eradicate her district of thousands of high-paying Amazon jobs? Because Cortez believes the free enterprise system that has given us the strongest, most innovative economy in the world isn't fair. Not fair because it does not provide free education for all, Medicare for all, and a guaranteed job at a living wage.

In other words, the government should provide these guarantees. That is called socialism. Under socialism, those serving in government become the new kings or dictators. The Soviet Union

provided these guarantees to its citizens, as do North Korea, Cuba and Venezuela today. The trade-off for such guarantees is the loss of individual liberty, human suffering and economic ruin.

In addition to Cortez in New York, the coasts are also home to the Democratic presidential candidates advocating for socialism in America (Elizabeth Warren, Massachusetts; Kamala Harris, California; Bernie Sanders; Vermont; Cory Booker, New Jersey). Think it is a coincidence that these states are experiencing net outbound migration of both people and businesses due to high taxes, massive regulation and out-of-control government spending? All of these states fall near the bottom of the CATO Institute's State Freedom Index, which measures how each state's policies promote fiscal, regulatory and personal freedom.

I am happy to report that the index ranks Indiana the third-most-free state in the nation. I also cannot find any Hoosier politicians on either side of the aisle who are advocating the radical socialist ideology emanating from both coasts. Most of middle America, "flyover" country, also ranks higher on the freedom index, and rarely do you hear politicians from these states advocating socialism. Rather than "flyover" states, the much better adjective is "freedom" states.

With apologies to New Hampshire, which is No. 2 on the Freedom Index, live free or die.