

Thomas: Florida is picking up good migration

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PALM BEACH, Fla. — While most attention has been focused on immigrants trying to enter the United States over America’s southern border, there is legal migration taking place that has been largely ignored, though it may have at least as much economic and political impact as the other.

People are moving out of high-tax states to Florida and other states with lower tax burdens.

Florida’s new governor, Ron DeSantis, mentioned the movement in a speech to the Club for Growth, which describes itself as “a national network of over 250,000 pro-growth, limited government Americans who share in the belief that prosperity and opportunity come from economic freedom.”

DeSantis says New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has accused him of stealing residents from his state. “I’m not stealing anybody,” said DeSantis, “they are driving people away.”

The data back him up.

Chris Edwards of the Foundation for Economic Freedom, the first free-market organization in the United States, produced a research document for the Cato Institute that shows “of the 25 highest-tax states, 24 of them had net out-migration in 2016.” One of the states that gained from migration was Florida where “145 households moved in for every 100 that left.”

DeSantis says this influx has fueled economic growth of the state, leading to a \$1.4 billion revenue surplus.

Economist Richard Rahn has created a chart that includes a comparison between the tax rates of New York and Florida. He writes that while New York imposes high taxes and conveys an anti-business attitude (the recent debacle with New York City losing a headquarters for Amazon is just the latest example), “Florida imposes no state and local income taxes in addition to the federal income tax — yet Florida is booming, with a budget surplus, while New York is mired in debt. Only 50 years ago, New York had four times the population of Florida, and now Florida is larger than New York.”

The sound economic state of Florida is not the only subject DeSantis is touting.

He won applause from the dinner crowd when he mentioned his executive orders suspending Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections Susan Bucher and Dr. Brenda Snipes, Broward County supervisor of elections. Republicans have accused these two of manipulating votes, causing confusion and chaos over vote counting that dates back to Bush-Gore in 2000.

DeSantis has other victories in his short time in office.

He has named three conservatives to the state Supreme Court, transforming it from a liberal to a solid conservative majority. He has also announced plans to sign an executive order scrapping the “common core” public school curriculum, replacing it with a “strong American civics” course.

As a new Florida resident, what amazes me is why high-tax states don’t get it? The facts are there for anyone to see, except for those who deliberately refuse to see them. And that’s the problem.

In the case of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, California and other Democrat-run states, ideology appears to have eclipsed reality.

If Gov. Cuomo thinks DeSantis is stealing residents from New York, maybe he should consider whether his policy of “stealing” taxpayer earnings and demanding that residents pay even more, isn’t the real reason for the exodus.

It is not a difficult question to answer.

In addition to the economic benefits associated with living in Florida, the weather is a lot nicer, if you discount the occasional hurricane. While people were freezing up North during the recent polar vortex, the sunny temperatures in South Florida ranged from the 70s to the low 80s.

So, keep coming New Yorkers, and others from high-tax states. Down here, the policy seems to be that if you can earn it, you get to keep more of it. That is the best prescription for economic growth and personal satisfaction.