

Political Scene: Who are those paid political ‘spies’?

11:15 AM EDT on Monday, October 4, 2010

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Journal State House Bureau

Carcieri rated a ‘B’

The Cato Institute, a conservative think tank in Washington, has given Republican [Governor Carcieri](#) a B — and its sixth-highest rating nationwide — in its latest annual report on governors’ tax and spending records.

Cato cited the passage this year of a tax overhaul Carcieri championed that cut the state’s top personal income tax rate from 9.90 percent to 5.99 percent. It subsequently came to light that wealthy taxpayers are likely to benefit far more than was previously disclosed.

But Carcieri hailed the Cato ranking as evidence that “we have made state government more affordable and accountable.... In the midst of the national recession, we have closed fiscal year 2010 with a general fund surplus of \$17.7 million and the Rainy Day Fund is fully funded, positioning the state to come out of the national recession stronger and more competitive.” (The news release did not mention how much the deficit-closing plan hinged on a massive infusion of [federal stimulus](#) dollars, and \$133 million-plus in local aid cuts.)

In 2006, Cato gave Carcieri got a C. With Carcieri in a reelection fight at the time, his then spokesman Jeff Neal said the governor “pays very little attention to the opinions of out-of-state think tanks like the Cato Institute, regardless of their political ideology.”