

Henry gets high marks in Cato Institute ranking of governors

The Oklahoma Editorials  6
Published: October 4, 2010

Brad Henry is an above-average governor. He'll leave office in January with a "B" on his report card from the libertarian Cato Institute. A few governors were given an "A" by Cato, but others flunked out. More Democrats than Republicans were rated as below average.

What got Henry, a Democrat, in the above-average category was his willingness to go along with a Republican Legislature bent on cutting taxes. Members of his own party still maintain that those cuts were responsible for the fiscal downturn state government has endured for years.

Henry, though, has disputed this belief, saying the problems would have occurred anyway. We agree, citing the problems in states where taxes were raised.

Connecticut Republican Gov. Jodi Rell got an "F" for this reason, as did six Democratic governors. Earning an "A" from Cato were three Republicans and one Democrat (West Virginia's Joe Manchin).

Henry might have earned a Cato "A" had it not been for his leadership during the fiscal crisis, in which he proposed broadening the sales tax base, and had he not in the past favored tax credits and exemptions, which Cato doesn't like.

The governor scored 62 on a Cato evaluation system in which the national average was 50. The nation's best governor by Cato's standard? South Carolina Republican Mark Sanford (74), a man with a below-average record in marital fidelity.

Henry has been an above-average governor for a variety of reasons. Here's hoping his successor is also.



Show / Hide Comments