

PEOPLE'S PUNDIT DAILY

Texas vs. California

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California is like France. Both are wonderful places to visit. They're also great places to live if you're part of the elite.

But neither is the ideal option for ordinary people who want upward mobility.

Back in 2016, I shared Census Bureau data showing that income was growing much faster for people in Texas, especially if you focus on median income (and this data doesn't even adjust for the cost of living).

So why is Texas growing faster?

Unsurprisingly, I think part of the answer is that the burden of government is significantly greater in California.

Take a look at this table from the most recent edition of *Freedom in the 50 States*. Texas is not the freest state, but its #10 ranking is much better than California's lowly #48 position.

If you're wondering why Illinois isn't at or near the bottom, keep in mind that this is a measure of overall economic freedom, not just fiscal policy.

In other words, California doesn't just have onerous taxes and an excessive burden of government, it also has lots of red tape and intervention.

These numbers presumably help explain why Babylon Bee came up with this clever satire.

The Texas legislature has approved construction of a border wall surrounding the state in order to keep out unwanted refugees fleeing the rapidly crumbling dystopia of California. ... The wall will run around the entirety of Texas, with extra security measures on the west side of the state to ensure undesirable Californian immigrants can't make it across. ... the west side will feature a 10-foot-thick concrete wall with laser turrets, barbed wire, and a moat filled with sharks to stop residents of the coastal state from slipping in undocumented and undetected. ... "Far too many immigrants from California come here, take advantage of our pro-business, pro-liberty laws, and refuse to adjust to our way of life," one Texas state rep said in an address to the assembly. "It is time for us to build a wall and make Governor Jerry Brown pay for it."

This is the flip side of Walter Williams' joke about California building a wall to keep taxpayers imprisoned.

But let's return to serious analysis.

Writing for *Forbes*, Chuck DeVore highlights some differences between his home state and his new state.

Over the past decade, the top states by GDP growth are: North Dakota, Texas, Nebraska, Washington, and Oregon. ...When using Supplemental Poverty Measure, the states with the highest poverty as averaged from 2014 to 2016, are: California (20.4%); Florida (18.8%); Louisiana (18.4%), Arizona (17.8%) and Mississippi (16.9%). The national average Supplemental Poverty rate over the last three years reported was 14.7%. Texas' poverty rate was at the national average. ...Combining two key factors, economic growth from 2007 to 2017 and the Supplemental Poverty Measure from 2014 to 2016, provides a better look at a state's economic wellbeing.

Here's a table from his column, which looks at growth and poverty in the nation's five-largest states.

Texas wins for prosperity and California "wins" for poverty.