



New York ranks ‘least free’ state in nation: study

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New York is the “least free” state of any in the nation because of its high taxes and heavy-handed rules controlling daily life, according to a study released Monday.

The Cato Institute analysis ranked New York dead last for economic and personal freedom.

New Hampshire, which has no sales tax and whose motto is “Live Free or Die,” was ranked No. 1.

By comparison, New York symbolizes big government run amok, the report from the conservative libertarian group said.

“New York looks set to remain the least free state for many years to come,” the group said.

“New York’s local tax burden is twice that of the average state. The state tax burden is also higher than the national average.”

The study rapped New York’s many layers of local government with “4.1 competing jurisdictions per 100 square miles of private land.”

New York is also the king of corporate welfare.

“The government spends almost four times what the average state does on subsidies to business,” the study said. And the Empire State saddles its residents with crushing debt — the “highest in the country at 31 percent of income.”

New York is also “the worst state on regulatory policy” — a Big Brother that tells businesses what to do instead of getting out of the way, according to the report.

Cato analysts flunked New York on land-use freedom, citing the “economically devastating rent control in New York City.”

The report also slammed New York government as a killjoy for banning fireworks, barring grocery stores from selling wine and imposing smoking bans and sky-high tobacco taxes.

New York’s gun laws are also onerous, Cato claims.

The study, however, hailed New York’s same-sex-marriage law.

Gov. Cuomo's office defended New York's record.

"We're proud of our efforts to protect renters and combat smoking," said Cuomo spokesman Richard Azzopardi.

"New York is the progressive capital of the world and, despite what any right wing think tank says," Azzopardi said.

"Any objective review of the facts would have also found this administration's reforms led to the lowest middle class tax rates in 70 years, the lowest manufacturing tax rate since 1917, the lowest corporate tax rate since 1968, a property tax cap, six budgets in a row with spending capped to 2 percent and the lowest debt to personal income ratio since the 1960s."