



Cato Institute Releases Index For 50 States Freedom Ranking

“...progressive capital...”

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New York State remains the least free state in the U.S. according to the Cato Institute, which has released its updated “Freedom in the 50 States” [report](#).

The Democrat dominated state with its multiple layers of high-spending government bureaucracy has been ranked as the least free state since 2000.

The states ranked most free were New Hampshire, Alaska and Oklahoma.

States were ranked on fiscal policy, which comprised about 30 percent of the ranking, regulatory policy, around 39 percent of the ranking, and personal freedom, about 29 percent of a state’s ranking. Each category was divided into various subsections.

The Cato Institute panned New York’s fiscal and regulatory landscape.

“If New York were to adopt a fiscal regime closer to that of California, New Jersey, or Connecticut, its overall economic freedom score would be close to theirs. As it is, New York looks set to remain the least free state for many years to come,” the report stated.

New York’s income tax burden is twice the national average while state spending is nearly four times the national average.

A [Tax Foundation](#) report found that New York residents paid an average of \$6,993 in combined state and local taxes in 2012. These include property taxes levied by villages, towns, cities and school districts as well as the state income tax and sales taxes charged by both the state and county governments. The national average for taxes is \$4,420.

“New York is also the worst state on regulatory policy, although here it is at least within striking distance of number 49 (California),” the Cato Institute report stated.

The Cato Institute advised New York to “cut spending on hospitals, housing, libraries, public welfare, sanitation and sewerage, public transit, employee retirement, and “miscellaneous”; cut all taxes, and pay down debt.”

It also called for the abolition of rent control in New York City and reducing taxes on tobacco. While the state tax on a pack of cigarettes is \$4.35, it is even higher in New York City, due to an added city tax.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office disputed the criticisms.

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

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