



## **Land of the Moderately Free: USA Far from the Most Free Country in the World**

Brett Meador  
September 7, 2015

The Human Freedom Index has downgraded the United States to the 20th most free country in the world. This puts America well behind its northern neighbor, Canada, which is ranked 6th. And even our mother country – the United Kingdom – far outranks us at 9th. This report is not surprising for those tracking other liberty indicators. The Heritage Foundation's Economic Freedom Index has tracked the demise of economic freedom in the United States for years – the US is currently at 12th globally.

America's press currently sits at 49th in the World Press Freedom Index. Perhaps that explains why these rankings are not receiving attention within the mainstream media.

It is not just the think tanks that are seeing the decline in freedom — ordinary Americans are feeling it, too. A 2014 Gallup poll found that 79% of Americans said they were satisfied with the freedom to choose their path in life in the previous year – a 12-point drop from 2006. This poll puts Americans' satisfaction at 36th in the world.

Feeling less free has led to frustration within the American people. Presidential candidates are tapping into this frustration as they search for something or someone to blame. Strangely, American voters continue to support candidates that want to make us less free.

To name a few of the recent anti-human liberty ideas: building a 2,000-mile wall on the southern border, suggesting drone missiles be used to blow up border caves, or using human homing beacons to track tourists. It sounds like many Republicans are brainstorming ways to plummet our freedom ranking even faster.

And many Democrats are saying that we will thrive if we put a massive income tax on the other guy, job creators like Uber, Lyft, and Airbnb should be outlawed in their current form, and they claim freedom to trade internationally is actually awful despite the near consensus within the economic community saying otherwise. Again, are they intentionally trying to undermine human freedom in America?

From the previously mentioned indicators, we see that countries ranked highest in freedom also enjoy the highest incomes and well-being. Until politicians seek to empower the individual – rather than control them – the U.S. will continue to decline in the rankings.

Candidates will claim they can solve our woes if we give them more power and more control. However, keep in mind the words of the British politician, Lord Acton.

“Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely”

History shows us that only human liberty will create peaceful, prosperous, and lasting societies.