



---

## Cato grades governors on taxing, spending

Chris Woodward  
October 07, 2014

**Students aren't the only ones receiving report cards this fall. An independent public policy research group has just released its biennial report card on governors.**

The [Cato Institute's report card](#) grades all the governors on their ability and willingness to stop the growth in government – in particular, their policies on tax and spending.

"We look at how much do governors increase taxes in their state or decrease taxes in their state," explains Cato budget analyst Nicole Kaeding, "and how much do they grow government spending and how much do they cut government spending."

Four governors, all Republicans, were awarded "A" grades: Kansas Governor Sam Brownback, North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory, Maine Governor Paul LaPage, and Indiana Governor Mike Pence. Eight Democratic governors received an "F": Mark Dayton (Minnesota), John Kitzhaber (Oregon), Jack Markell (Delaware), Jay Inslee (Washington), Pat Quinn (Illinois), Deval Patrick (Massachusetts), John Hickenlooper (Colorado), and Jerry Brown (California).

"In the report – and this has been true over the years – we tend to find that Republicans are more fiscally conservative than Democrats, but that's not the case for every single governor," she clarifies for those who may suspect the report has a partisan bent.

"We actually have several Democrat governors receiving B's, in particular, Andrew Cuomo (New York) and Lincoln Chafee (Rhode Island)," Kaeding continues, "and what they received high marks for in particular is their corporate tax reforms that they passed this year."

On the other hand, Kaeding says several Republican governors are receiving D's: "Most notably Governor John Kasich of Ohio and Governor Rick Snyder of Michigan." In those cases, Kaeding says they have pushed the growth of government in their state.

"Governor Snyder has supported an over billion-dollar increase in the state's gas tax and Governor Kasich has grown spending dramatically in the state, though he did pass a tax cut," she concludes.