

WBR ARTICLE

Wyo economy ranked fourth

By Staff

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – In the American Legislative Exchange Council's (ALEC) first economic ranking of all 50 states, Wyoming, with no income, business, or estate taxes, low debt, recent tax cuts, and "right-to-work" status was ranked as the 4th best state in the country. The report, RICH STATES, POOR STATES: ALEC-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index, was a collaborative effort from authors Dr. Arthur Laffer, nationally recognized economist, and Stephen Moore of the Wall Street Journal.

According to the authors, Wyoming has reversed a previous trend of losing population and since 2002, people have been moving into the state, especially job seekers from places like Michigan. Wyoming's unemployment rate is a low 3.3 percent.

"Wyoming's economy is doing very well and this report only confirms that we have our low-tax and pro-growth policies to thank for it," said State Representative Peter Illoway, and ALEC's State Chairman. "If other states choose to have policies that drive out their businesspeople and residents, I say let's make sure they feel welcome here."

According to the report, Wyoming ranked first in such categories as taxes levied on personal and corporate income, estate tax, right-to-work status and minimum wage (the lowest allowable by federal law). Wyoming ranked last out of the 50 states for having the least number of full-time public employees, 889.4 per 10,000 population,

The authors identify 16 policy variables with a proven impact on the migration of human and investment capital in and out of states. According to their findings, a record 8 million Americans moved from one state to another last year, revealing which states have the most dynamic and desirable economies, and which are "has-been" states. The winners in this contest are generally the states with the lowest tax, spending and regulatory burdens. The biggest losers are California, the Northeast, and the Midwest.

"The historical evidence is clear: States that keep spending and taxes low exhibit the best economic results, while states that follow the tax-and-spend path lag far behind. Today, many states stand at a crossroads, and it will soon become apparent if lawmakers choose to use history as a guide for their actions. No state has ever taxed its way into prosperity. This is not about Republican versus Democrat, or left versus right. It is simply a choice between economic vitality and economic malaise," said Jonathan P. Williams, Director of ALEC's Tax and Fiscal Policy Task Force.

The complete book is available online at www.alec.org; each state can be downloaded individually. Also available is a link to the C-SPAN video presentation by the authors.