

NEWS RELEASE

Canadian provinces tumble down North American economic freedom ranking

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For Immediate Release

CALGARY—Canadian provinces continue to lag behind U.S. states in the world’s premier ranking of economic freedom in North America, finds a new report released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan, public policy think-tank.

Economic freedom—the ability of individuals to make their own economic decisions including what to buy, where to work and whether to start a business—is fundamental to prosperity.

“Higher levels of economic freedom lead to more opportunity, more prosperity, greater economic growth, more investment and jobs,” said Fred McMahon, the Dr. Michael A. Walker Research Chair in Economic Freedom at the Fraser Institute and co-author of this year’s [*Economic Freedom of North America*](#) report, which measures government spending, taxation and labour market restrictions using data from 2018 (the latest year of available comparable data).

After seven straight years atop the rankings—which include the 50 U.S. states, 32 Mexican states and 10 Canadian provinces—Alberta fell from top spot two years ago (based on 2016 data) and this year tied for 9th place (based on 2018 data). However, a change in government likely means the province will improve its ranking in coming years.

“While the new government in Alberta has made some progress in changing the course of policy, much remains to be done to once again make the province the most economically-free jurisdiction in North America,” McMahon said.

British Columbia is the second-highest ranked province (27th) followed by Ontario (45th), Saskatchewan (47th), Manitoba (52nd) and Quebec (55th).

The four Atlantic provinces—New Brunswick (57th), Nova Scotia (58), Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland & Labrador (tied at 59th)—have the lowest levels of economic freedom among all provinces and U.S. states, only outranking the Mexican states. New Hampshire retained its top spot in the rankings again this year.

Crucially, from 2015 to 2018 (again, the latest year of available comparable data), the United States and Canada have diverged in their levels of economic freedom.

“In recent years, Canadian provinces have dropped down in the North American economic freedom ranking and that has real consequences for the economic prospects of Canadians and their families,” McMahon said.

The [*Economic Freedom of North America*](#) report (also co-authored by José Torra, head of research at the Mexico City-based Caminos de la Libertad) is an offshoot of the Fraser Institute’s [*Economic Freedom of the World*](#) index, the result of more than a quarter century of work by more than 60 scholars including three Nobel laureates.

Detailed tables for each country and subnational jurisdiction can be found at www.fraserinstitute.org.

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