

U.S. lags while world gains

## Global Economic Freedom Rises

This year's *Economic Freedom of the World: 2016 Annual Report*, co-published by the Cato Institute, the Fraser Institute, and over 70 other think tanks around the world, brings grim news for the United States, but good news globally. While the U.S. lags in 16th place for the second year in a row, global economic freedom increased to 6.85 out of 10.

The United States has plummeted in the rankings since the year 2000, when it stood in second place. This decline is largely thanks to a weakening of the rule of law, increasing regulation, and the devastating effects of the wars on terrorism and drugs.

Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, and Switzerland led the rankings. The least economically free countries were Iran, Algeria, Chad, Guinea, Angola, the Central African Republic, Argentina, the Republic of the

Congo, Libya and, in last place, Venezuela.

The United States is not the only large economy lacking in economic freedom—Germany came in at number 30, France at 57, Italy 69, Russia 102, and India and China at 112 and 113.

The index demonstrates that economic freedom matters—nations in the top quartile of economic freedom enjoyed an average per capita GDP of \$41,228 in 2014, compared to just \$5,471 for countries in the bottom quartile. The income of the poorest 10 percent of the population was also much higher in countries with more economic freedom. Life expectancy was over 80 years in the top quartile, compared to just 64 in the bottom, and political and civil liberties were significantly higher in the more economically free countries.

This year's edition of the index takes a close look at Ireland, Venezuela, and the United States, as well as at the relationship between gender disparity and economic freedom. ■

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# Cato News Notes

## SOUTH AFRICA'S LIBERTARIAN MAYOR

Herman Mashaba, a member of Cato's Selection Committee for this year's Milton Friedman Prize, has been elected mayor of Johannesburg. Johannesburg is South Africa's largest city, home to over 4 million people—making it larger than Los Angeles, America's second largest city. Mashaba calls individual freedom his highest value, and told *The Globe and Mail*, "I'm just asking the government to leave us alone." While his own political party, the Democratic Alliance, backs the minimum wage, he denounced it as "an evil system to deprive poor uneducated people of the opportunity to advance."

## CATO STUDY MAKES LATE-NIGHT TV

Alex Nowrasteh's recent study on the risk of immigrants becoming terrorists, which found that the chance of an American being murdered in a terrorist attack by a refugee is 1 in 3.64 billion per year, was featured on both the *Late Show with Stephen Colbert* and the *Daily Show with Trevor Noah*, as well as being cited by numerous other media outlets and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in his *Washington Post* column. Nowrasteh's timely study, the first ever to conduct a risk analysis of the visa categories that foreign-born terrorists have used to enter the United States, was widely used to refute Donald Trump Jr.'s controversial Skittles analogy—a picture of a bowl of Skittles with the caption "If I had a bowl of Skittles and I told you just three would kill you, would you take a handful? That's our Syrian refugee problem." Nowrasteh used his data to rewrite the proper Skittles analogy: "The chance of any American actually eating the fatal Skittle and perishing is about one in 3.64 billion a year during [a] 41-year time period. Do you eat from the bowl without quaking in your boots? I would."

## SANCHEZ SURVEYED BY THE POST

Cato senior fellow Julian Sanchez was one of six experts surveyed by the *Washington Post* on the presidential candidates' cybersecurity policies and practices. The other five were a former director of the CIA and the NSA, a former general counsel of the NSA, a former privacy officer at Google, a former chief privacy counselor at the Office of Management and Budget, and a former assistant secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

## LUKEWARMING TOPS AMAZON CHARTS

*Lukewarming*, the new Cato book by Pat Michaels and Chip Knappenberger, was released last year as an ebook, and more recently in an updated and expanded paperback edition. The new edition reached #1 on Amazon's bestseller lists for earth sciences, climatology, weather, and environmental policy. The Kindle version was also #1 in weather. In *Lukewarming*, Michaels and Knappenberger make the case that global warming is neither "hot" (dire) nor "cold" (nonexistent), but lukewarm.