

March 26, 2018

I recently read an article in US News and World Report regarding the ranking of states based on Quality of Life. They based the ranking, in this category, in regards two main issues/ Natural environment and social environment.

Natural Environment measures drinking water quality, pollution industrial toxins and air quality. Social Environment measures community engagement, social support and voter participation. The report also ranked states in a number of other separate categories such as Health Care, Education, Economy, opportunity, infrastructure, Crime and Fiscal Stability.

The one I found most interesting though was quality of life due to the ranking. The top five states in this category were North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, New Hampshire and South Dakota. The states rounding out the bottom of the list were West Virginia, Texas, Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey and California was dead last in ranking for quality of life.

California did fare much better in two other categories. In regards to the economy California ranked number four and in Health care eleven. In the other five categories California ranked in the middle or slightly lower. The number one state including all eight categories was Iowa.

California has the largest population and economy than any other state in the union but ranks 50th in quality of life. This seems to be out of kilter with where we should be due to

California's influence in our country and the world. California has the 6th largest economy in the world behind the US, China, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom. So with all the prosperity it makes you wonder why the state ranks so low in the area of Quality of Life.

Google Middle class leaving California and you will find numerous articles detailing a large Exodus for greener pastures in tax friendly states such as Texas. Many are leaving for better jobs and opportunity along with affordable housing and way of life. It appears as though the natural and social environment in California is no longer appealing to the middle working class.

The problem though is that California needs the middle class to survive and fund the many social programs which are now becoming a burden on the residents of the state. Increased taxation is the only way to sustain these programs and we continue to see the increase in sales tax, higher taxes on fuel and other state and local taxes.

There seems to be no end in the appetite of our legislature in Sacramento, which will someday result in economic collapse unless there are changes at the state level. Our Quality of Life will continue to suffer and more people will leave in an effort to regain it. It is hard to fathom that the Golden State once was one of opportunity and prosperity ranks last in Quality of Life and 32nd overall. This has been Mike Downey for Community Comment.