



Washington Pride

Do We Still Care About Our Beautiful State?

As a native Washingtonian, I recall pride in living in a state where safety was an expectation, shoplifting was illegal, police were respected, schools taught civics, and it was safe to take public transportation to Third and Pine, downtown Seattle. I recall feeling pride when Washington was listed among the best states to visit, live, and do business. Washington has so much physical beauty, from the ocean and sound to the cascade mountain range, the Columbia River Gorge, and the rolling fields of agriculture. Out-of-state friends always wanted to spend their vacation time in my home state. Now they ask me if it is safe to hang out downtown Seattle, and sadly, I can't honestly respond yes.

The state was often ranked highly for its educational opportunities, offering quality schooling options and higher education institutions. In addition, its natural beauty, including mountains, forests, and a vast coastline, contributed to its reputation as a desirable place to live, providing residents with ample outdoor activities and a high quality of life and in economy.

Washington was also praised for its lack of a state income tax, a feature that made it financially appealing to both individuals and businesses. Even as recently as 2018, Washington was listed as one of the the most livable states. <https://livability.com/wa/where-to-live-now/8-reasons-to-move-to-washington-state/>.

In the early 2000s, Washington State was frequently highlighted in various rankings as one of the best places to live in the United States. For example, it was recognized for its strong job market, largely driven by tech giants like Microsoft and Amazon, as well as the aviation industry led by Boeing. The Seattle area, in particular, was considered a major employment hub, attracting people from across the country due to its booming job opportunities and robust

How is Washington Regarded now?

In recent years, Washington has seen a decline in these rankings. For instance, in 2024, it was ranked as the 46th worst state for doing business due to its challenging tax environment and high costs for businesses. Additionally, Washington has been listed as the eighth most dangerous state in the U.S. in 2024 due to rising crime rates, which is a significant drop from its previously safer standings. <https://www.washingtonpolicy.org/publications/detail/latest-survey-from-chief-executive-ranks-washington-the-46th-worst-state-to-do-business-in>

Here are a few articles that highlight Washington's challenges with crime, business climate, and taxation, that are bringing down the livability of our beautiful state.

Crime -Washington State's violent crime rate has risen above the national average for the first time, with a rate of 4.7 incidents per 1,000 people. Concerns about safety are growing, as only 29% of Washington residents reported feeling safe in 2024. Issues like robbery are particularly concerning, with rates more than twice the national average. You can explore more in the report on Washington's crime rates. (<https://www.worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/crime-rate-by-state>).

Business-Environment Washington ranks 32nd out of 50 states in the 2024 State Business Tax Climate Index. This low ranking is primarily due to Washington's complex tax system, which includes high Business & Occupation (B&O) taxes. The state's tax structure places a heavier burden on businesses, making it less attractive for companies compared to other states with simpler, more business-friendly tax codes. Read more about Washington's business climate [\[here\]\(https://taxfoundation.org/2024-state-business-tax-climate-index/\)](https://taxfoundation.org/2024-state-business-tax-climate-index/).

Taxation- Washington's tax burden is among the highest in the country, with residents paying significant portions of their income toward taxes. The state also imposes one of the highest combined state and local sales tax rates, at 9.38%, which contributes to its unfavorable ranking in business and taxation comparisons. For more details on Washington's tax ranking, visit [\[this link\]\(https://www.taxfoundation.org/washington-tax-rates/\)](https://www.taxfoundation.org/washington-tax-rates/).

Do Current Residents Value Washington?

Only 42% of Washington Citizens are native to Washington. I am not sure if recent transplants can truly have the same emotional reaction watching Washington decline on all the basic metrics like education, crime, unemployment and cost of living. I hope that people will wake up and pay attention to the fact that unchecked progressive policies have lead us in the wrong direction.