

VERMONT IS THE IDEAL STATE FOR THE FREE STATE PROJECT

1. IMPACT

FSP success in Vermont would have the greatest impact of any state being considered.

At the Federal level, Vermont has a notoriously anti-liberty congressional delegation: Congressmen Bernie Sanders (I), Senator Patrick Leahy (D), and Senator James Jeffords (I). FSP voters could end their reign and Vermont and the nation would benefit from three additional pro-liberty votes in Washington. Conversely, FSP success in liberty leaning states like WY and NH would have little impact on the political scene and not get media attention. WY has the most libertarian voting congressional delegation in the country. FSP votes would simply widen existing margins of victory – hardly a strategic priority.

2. POPULATION

Vermont has the second smallest population with just over 600,000. In addition the population is spread among over 250 towns and cities with the largest city, Burlington, having less than 50,000 people and the state capital, Montpelier, less than 10,000. Vermont could be changed with between 1,000 and 5,000 activists. NH with a much larger population would require many more activists for a similar impact. If 20,000 sign up, but only a third relocate to VT, they will still have a better chance here than in larger population states.

3. RECENT HISTORY IS ON VERMONT'S SIDE

One of only two states not carried during FDR's landslide victory, Vermont remained without income or sales taxes until just four decades ago. Traditionally pro-liberty anti-big government natives have been out politicked by the Progressive (Socialist) movement fueled by an influx of those who chose to move to Vermont because it was an easy state to make an impact on and offered a high quality standard of living.

4. ACCESSIBILITY

A serious campaign for statewide or federal office is a bargain at about \$500,000. This is \$100 a person from 5000 Free-Staters. VT has smaller house & senate districts than NH, with a campaign for State Representative costing about \$3000, a pair of sneakers, and knocking on 1000 or so doors.

Ballot access is attainable through minimal party organization efforts or via petition for non-party affiliated candidates, e.g., 50 signatures to run for State Representative, 100 for county offices or state senator, or 500 for statewide and congressional offices. Vermont also allows multi-party fusion candidates, with even statewide candidates often getting the nomination of both major parties.

Vermont has a stronger system of town government & local democracy than any other state, allowing for rapid FSP influence from the grassroots. FSP activists, at town meeting or on local boards, could lead local efforts to end zoning, cut school spending, reduce property taxes, or implement school choice.

5. LIBERTARIAN INDICATORS

VT has 10 LP members elected to local offices. We have elected a LP member to the State House. We've proven Libertarians can be elected in VT. In the consecutive annual Town Meeting Day surveys conducted statewide by the VTLP, a majority of voters indicate libertarian-leanings on key issues.

6. READY ALLIES

Vermont has a large second home owner population that is either wealthy or fled the state for tax purposes that might be able to be rallied and recalled if we convince them to lower the tax burden. Also, 80% of the Vermont economic engine is made up of small business owners, many of whom are fed up with increasing regulation and taxation. The independent nature of many native Vermonters is also philosophically aligned with libertarianism.

7. PROXIMITY

Vermont is small enough that residents can live in VT and work in NH, MA, or NY. Residents in eastern Vermont can also shop in NH, which has no sales tax. Also, with the populations of neighboring state far greater than ours, if activist from all four neighboring states focused on Vermont the effect could be dramatic. New England has a strong regional community. Political rumblings in Vermont would get coverage in media throughout New England and New York.

Vermont is only a few hours drive from metropolitan cultural and economic centers: Montreal, New York, Boston.

8. QUALITY OF LIFE

The intangibles are unmatched. With the nation's lowest level of urbanization (highest level of rurality), Vermont is beautiful and clean, with low crime, strong native heritage, and strong local communities. Vermont's few cities have pedestrian-friendly downtowns and light traffic. The largest city, Burlington, has been ranked one of the top 10 best places to live.

There are also skiing, hiking, horses, good food, a ton of public and private colleges and universities (UVM, Norwich, Middlebury, Bennington, Dartmouth, Saint Michael's, Marlboro, Goddard, Champlain, Castleton, Johnson, Vermont Technical), the sixth great lake (Lake Champlain), 90 towns with full high school choice, 45 towns with full elementary school choice, 30 towns without zoning, the vast undeveloped Northeast Kingdom, a medical marijuana bill that has passed house and senate, civil unions, towns that have privatized their schools and others that raise private funds to support their schools, and Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream.

9. FIREARM FRIENDLY

Vermont is a premier firearm friendly state with constitutional protection of the right to bear arms that is stronger than the federal constitution and no gun control laws. In addition, state law prohibits any town, city or incorporated village, by ordinance, resolution or other enactment, from directly regulate hunting, fishing and trapping or the possession, ownership, transportation, transfer, sale, purchase, carrying, licensing or registration of traps, firearms, ammunition or components of firearms or ammunition.

10. ENVIRONMENTALLY & SOCIALLY AWARE

Vermont has a strong environmental movement, and 85% of the land is privately owned. Something that might work in VT that might not work in the other states is a zero tolerance for pollution on public lands and waterways. The environmentalists would love it. The exchange would be a full deregulation of land use, taxes, and other restrictions on businesses so they have the freedom and resources to be Vermont-Clean. Green-Up Day is a popular Vermont tradition. On Earth Day each year volunteers scour the countryside picking trash after the winter's snows have melted - 30,000 bags of garbage were picked in 2003. Socially conscious companies pepper the state: Ben & Jerry's, Seventh Generation, Magic Hat Brewing Co., and many more.