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ANNUAL FAMILY PROSPERITY INDEX SHOWS UTAH IN TOP SPOT, WEST VIRGINIA DEAD LAST

WASHINGTON, D.C., (February 16, 2017)—The [2017 Family Prosperity Index](#) (FPI), released today by the American Conservative Union Foundation (ACUF), shows Utah maintaining its status as the #1 state in the U.S. for family well-being, earning top scores for its young population, low dependence on government, and strong family culture. At the other end of the spectrum, West Virginia ranks last, scoring the worst in the Index's economic categories and in the bottom 10 states across most other measures.

ACUF economists Wendy P. Warcholik, Ph.D., and J. Scott Moody, M.A., created the FPI to measure the relationship between economic and social factors and their impact on families. The husband-and-wife team, who direct ACUF's Family Prosperity Initiative, are also the creators of the Tax Foundation's State Business Tax Climate Index, an authoritative measure of the impact of tax policy on business, now in its fifteenth year of publication.

The 2017 FPI is based on an analysis of publicly-available, mostly government-produced data for 60 different variables ranging from personal income to single-parenthood to obesity, along with a host of other variables in six categories – economics, demographics, family self-sufficiency, family structure, family culture, and family health. Because the FPI does not work solely with economic data, it provides the most comprehensive assessment of how well – or poorly – families are doing in a particular state and highlights areas in need of improvement. By ranking states against each other, the Index allows for comparisons within regions and across the country.

The annual FPI is a reference for state policy makers, think tanks, activists, and families, as they seek to better understand the problems their states are facing. The 2017 edition includes a new measure of early mortality (years of productive life lost), as well as a more accurate picture of illicit drug use, and a means of showing how much income leaves a state when residents move away.

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In addition to publishing its annual national Index, the Family Prosperity Initiative partners with State Policy Network think tanks and Family Policy Council affiliates to produce a series of “deep-dive” state studies each year. The 2016 studies included [Wisconsin](#), [New Hampshire](#), [Utah](#), and [Rhode Island](#).

“The Family Prosperity Index continues to be an important part of the American Conservative Union Foundation’s mission to educate everyday Americans, policy makers, and opinion leaders about the problems facing our society and the steps they can take to help solve them,” said ACUF Chairman Matt Schlapp. “In the last year, the FPI has enabled us to broaden our focus to include working more closely with state think tanks and policy organizations to address the problems facing American families and their communities. In order to solve our biggest problems, we first have to identify and quantify them, and the FPI helps us do just that,” said Schlapp.

The Family Prosperity Index will be a key focus of the 2017 [Conservative Political Action Conference](#) next week at the National Harbor. The Family Prosperity Initiative will host a panel discussion as well as private briefings for those policymakers, think tank leaders, and policy advocates who will find the updated 2017 Index useful to their work. In addition, CPAC attendees will have access to the FPI booth, where they can learn where their state ranks and how they can use the data to improve prosperity in their own communities.

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