

# The State of the Union Report

In accordance with Article II, Section 3 of the U.S. Constitution the President “*shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient.*”

The State of the Union Report, customarily delivered in January, serves as the President’s fulfillment of this constitutional obligation. However, U.S. presidents frequently focus on celebrating accomplishments rather than offering a frank evaluation of the nation’s pressing needs, which can leave Congress and the public uncertain about which programs and measures are truly “necessary and expedient” to improve the well-being of Americans.

This report then suggests actions for improvement by the U.S., including draft legislation to address these challenges to improve the quality of life for Americans. Sometimes funds are suggested to make these, improvements, though funds are not always, necessary.

To make more specific and effective recommendation, we would like to receive your solution suggestions by email with a subject: *the specific social or economic indicator*) to [info@stateoftheunionreport.us](mailto:info@stateoftheunionreport.us) We will do our best to include your suggestions in the next revision.

This report is intended to assist presidents, elected leaders, and citizens by identifying and ranking countries whose leadership delivers the highest quality of life to their people. High-quality leadership is reflected in exemplary health and education systems, affordable housing, financial stability, clean air, low crime rates, and robust economies—making these nations some of the best places in the world to live.

*Limitations of the Report* . Some data sources may be between one and four years old, though artificial intelligence is expected to make data more current. Additionally, these rankings should not be viewed as definitive, since countries may have different definitions for concepts like “homelessness” and “affordable housing,” as well as other social and economic indicators.

However, if a country ranks 15th or lower from the top, its leaders should see this as a signal for improvement. A ranking of 25th or lower serves as a clear warning of significant shortcomings in leadership and an urgent need for action.

The report goes on to suggest specific actions for improvement in the U.S., including draft legislation aimed at addressing these challenges and enhancing the quality of life for Americans. In some cases, funding is recommended to support these improvements, though financial resources are not always required.

To provide more targeted and effective recommendations, we invite you to share your solution ideas by email. Please use the subject line: *the specific social or economic indicator* and send your suggestions to [info@stateoftheunionreport.us](mailto:info@stateoftheunionreport.us) We will strive to include your feedback in the next revision of this report.



Ron Bonfilio , © 2026 Ronald Bonfilio

# CONTENTS

## Contents

<b>The State of the Union Report</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Health</b>	<b>4</b>
World Happiness Report	4
Ethnic Harmony	4
Life Expectancy Rate	4
Suicide Rate	4
Access to Healthcare	4
Access to Mental Health Support	5
Percentage of People Who Feel Respected or Valued in Their Community	5
Percentage of People Who Feel Socially Connected	5
Access to Affordable Child Care	5
Environmental Quality Exposure: Air	5
Environmental Quality Exposure: Noise	6
Noncommunicable Diseases	6
Communicable Diseases	6
Morbidity Inequality	6
Obesity	6
Alcohol Use	6
Cancer	7
Cardiovascular Disease	7
Loneliness of the Elderly	7
Percentage Socially connected	7
Drug Prices	7
Doctors per Capita	7
Nurses per Capita	7
<b>Education</b>	<b>8</b>
Graduation Rates: High School	8
Graduation Rates: College	8
Education	8
Quality: PISA Test Results	8
Access to Education: Country Cost Comparisons	8
Access to Colleges	8
Access to Trade Schools	9
<b>Income</b>	<b>9</b>

Persons Below Poverty Line	9
Income Inequality	9
<b>Safety</b>	<b>9</b>
Violent Crime Rate	9
Feeling Safe	9
Corruption Perception	9
<b>Freedoms</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Freedom of Expression</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Freedom of Speech</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Freedom of Press</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Economic Indicators</b>	<b>10</b>
Consumer Prices (CPI)	10
Unemployment Rate	10
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	11
GDP per Capita	11
Total Factor Productivity (TFP)	11
Affordable Housing	11
Interest Rates: Home Mortgages	11
<b>International Security</b>	<b>11</b>
Military Budget	11

## Health

### World Happiness Report.

Rank **19**

Based on the World Happiness Report, the U.S. ranks **lower today than a decade ago**, while many peer countries, especially Finland, Denmark, Iceland, and the Netherlands remain at the top. Possible reasons why the U.S. scores lower:

Social isolation

Economic inequality

Declines in institutional trust

Rising mental health concerns

Lack of free or low cost: healthcare, education and childcare

[Continue](#)

### Ethnic Harmony

Rank **30**

The United States ranks 30th out of the top 35 countries in ethnic harmony, with an Ethnic Harmony Index score of 0.68. The United States' ranking reflects a complex history of racial and ethnic tensions, systemic inequalities rooted in slavery and segregation, and ongoing disparities in wealth, education, healthcare, and criminal justice outcomes. [Continue](#)

### Life Expectancy Rate

Rank **27**

The U.S. trails most developed nations in life expectancy. Countries like Japan, Italy, and Australia rank significantly higher due to preventive care systems and healthier lifestyle patterns. [Continue](#)

### Suicide Rate

Rank **>35**

The U.S. suicide rate is **higher than in most high-income countries**, especially in Western Europe. Many peer nations, such as the U.K., Italy, and Spain report significantly lower rates, while countries like South Korea, Japan, and parts of Eastern Europe show higher ones. [Continue](#)

### Access to Healthcare

Rank **25**

Unlike the universal systems found in Canada, the U.K., and France, the U.S. maintains a mixed private-public model, resulting in uneven access and high out-of-pocket costs. [Continue](#)

## Access to Mental Health Support

Rank **23**

Compared with many OECD countries, the U.S. has **more mental-health professionals per capita**, but **less universal access** because coverage varies widely by insurance, cost, and geography.

Canada, Norway, Denmark, and the U.K. generally offer **universal mental-health coverage** with minimal out-of-pocket costs.

The U.S. often requires private insurance or high co-payments, creating gaps in treatment availability. [Continue](#)

## Percentage of People Who Feel Respected or Valued in Their Community

Rank **35**

Surveys from international quality-of-life assessments show the U.S. ranking **mid-range** on perceived respect and social value.

Scandinavian countries (Finland, Denmark, Norway) consistently report high levels of social respect and trust. [Continue](#)

## Access to Affordable Child Care

Rank **33**

Child care in the U.S. is among the **most expensive in the OECD**, often reaching the cost of a mortgage payment.

Nations like Sweden, France, Germany, and Japan subsidize child care heavily, reducing costs for families. The U.S. provides patchy support, often dependent on state or employer programs.

[Continue](#)

## Environmental Quality Exposure: Air

Rank **>35**

(Conflicting Data, Further Analysis Necessary)

Air quality in the United States is moderate compared with Europe and East Asia.

Scandinavian countries achieve some of the world's cleanest air, while U.S. metropolitan areas still experience elevated particulate and noise levels. [Continue](#)

## Environmental Quality Exposure: Noise

Rank **>35**

The United States does not appear among the top 35 countries with the lowest noise pollution levels. The United States lacks a single comprehensive federal noise standard for urban environments, relying instead on a patchwork of state and municipal regulations that vary widely in their stringency and enforcement.

[Continue](#)

## Noncommunicable Diseases

Rank **35**

Rates of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and chronic respiratory illness are higher in the U.S. than in many advanced nations, reflecting diet, physical inactivity, and unequal access to preventive medicine. [Continue](#)

## **Communicable Diseases**

**Rank >35**

The United States does not appear among the countries with the lowest communicable disease mortality rates. Current estimates indicate the United States communicable disease mortality rate is approximately 63 deaths per 100,000 population annually. Public health researchers attribute this difference to fragmented health system coordination, regional disparities in vaccination coverage, higher prevalence of chronic disease risk factors, uneven access to preventive care, and inconsistent public health funding across states. [Continue](#)

## **Morbidity Inequality**

**Rank >35**

the United States does not appear among the top 35 countries with the lowest morbidity inequality. Current estimates place the United States around rank 42 due to significant differences in chronic disease rates across socioeconomic groups, uneven access to preventive healthcare services, high costs of medical care, and regional disparities between rural and urban healthcare infrastructure. Health outcomes in the U.S. vary significantly by income, geography, and race. Many European countries with universal healthcare systems show narrower gaps in morbidity. [Continue](#)

## **Obesity**

**Rank >35**

The U.S. has one of the highest obesity rates in the world. Countries across East Asia and Western Europe show far lower prevalence due to different dietary norms, urban design, and public health policies. [Continue](#)

## **Alcohol Use**

**Rank >35**

U.S. alcohol consumption is moderate globally lower than many European nations such as Germany, France, and the U.K.—but problems with alcohol-related mortality remain high compared with peer countries. [Continue](#)

## **Cancer**

**Rank >35**

The United States does not appear on the list of the top 35 countries with the lowest cancer rates. According to Globocan 2022 data, the United States has an age-standardized cancer incidence rate of approximately 363.2 per 100,000 people, which is among the highest in the world. [Continue](#)

## **Cardiovascular Disease**

**Rank >35**

The United States does not appear among the top 35 countries with the lowest cardiovascular disease rates. Major contributing factors include high obesity prevalence, high sodium consumption, sedentary lifestyle patterns, unequal healthcare access, high prevalence of

hypertension and diabetes, and inconsistent national prevention policies. [Continue](#)

### **Loneliness of the Elderly**

**Rank >35**

The United States typically ranks below many Northern European countries in measures of elderly social connectedness. Recent U.S. survey estimates suggest roughly 22–24 percent of adults aged 65 and older report persistent loneliness or social isolation. [Continue](#)

### **Percentage Socially connected**

**Rank 21**

The United States ranks 21st globally, with 68.7% of people reporting they feel socially connected (2022-2023 data). This places the U.S. below many peer nations and reflects a documented decline in social connectedness over the past three decades. [Continue](#)

### **Drug Prices**

**Rank >35**

Prescription drug prices in the United States are the highest globally. In contrast, other developed nations implement regulations on pharmaceutical pricing, which leads to much lower costs for comparable medications. One way to address high drug prices is through a presidential Executive Order permitting the importation of medications from Canada and other countries. Most major countries have agencies similar to the Food and Drug Administration to safeguard public health. Therefore, the assertion that only U.S. drug manufacturers produce safe medications cannot be substantiated is unconscionable. [Continue](#)

### **Doctors per Capita**

**Rank 30**

The U.S. has fewer physicians per capita than many European countries, such as Austria, Norway, and Germany, which increases strain on healthcare access and wait times. [Continue](#)

### **Nurses per Capita**

**Rank 5**

The United States ranks 6th among countries with the highest number of nurses per capita, with approximately 15.6 nurses per 1,000 population as of 2022.

While this places the United States among the top ten globally, several European nations with smaller and more homogeneous populations outrank the U.S. [Continue](#)

## **Education**

### **Graduation Rates: High School**

**Rank xx**

U.S. high school graduation rates are strong and comparable to much of the OECD, though nations like Japan and South Korea maintain consistently higher completion rates. [Continue](#)

### **Graduation Rates: College**

**Rank 20**

The U.S. leads the world in total number of college graduates, but rising tuition costs create

barriers to access. Countries with subsidized or free higher education, like Germany and Finland show more equitable completion rates. [Continue](#)

## **Education**

**Rank 26**

Quality: Country Ranking: The United States ranks about 10<sup>th</sup> compared to other countries according to data from the 2023-2024 United Nations Human Development Education Index which provides an overview of academic performance around the world. [continue](#)

## **Quality: PISA Test Results**

**Rank 31**

On international PISA assessments, U.S. students score close to the OECD average. East Asian nations such as Singapore, South Korea, and Japan dominate global rankings. At the present time the United States has ranked about 24<sup>th</sup>, behind other advanced countries and has chosen no longer to participate in the Program for International Student Assessment. [Continue](#)

## **Access to Education: Country Cost Comparisons**

**Rank 33**

Over 60 countries have free or low cost college tuition. The United States is not one of them. Rank of the United States and Analysis: The United States ranks 33<sup>rd</sup> among the top 35 countries with the highest access to education, with an Access to Education Index of 95.8% (2023).

While the U.S. has one of the most well-resourced education systems in the world, its ranking reflects persistent structural disparities.

[Continue](#)

## **Access to Colleges**

**Rank 31**

The United States ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the world for access to colleges with a Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of 88%, reflecting the widespread availability of community colleges, state universities, and private institutions.

However, the U.S. does not rank first because tuition costs remain among the highest in the world, student debt burden exceeds \$1.7 trillion, and structural inequities in K-12 preparation limit access for low-income and minority students. [Continue](#)

## **Access to Trade Schools**

**Rank 29**

The United States (United States) (United States (United States)) ranks 29<sup>th</sup> out of 35 countries in this analysis. The U.S. holds this relatively low ranking primarily because of a decades-long cultural and policy emphasis on four-year college degrees over vocational and career technical education. [Continue](#)

## **Income**

## Persons Below Poverty Line

Rank >35

The U.S. has one of the highest relative poverty rates among high-income nations. Countries with comprehensive social welfare systems report substantially lower poverty levels. [Continue](#)

## Income Inequality

Rank 34

Income inequality in the U.S. is high compared with Europe and Canada. Nordic nations consistently demonstrate the lowest inequality due to redistributive tax and welfare policies. [Continue](#)

## Safety

### Violent Crime Rate

Rank >35

The U.S. has significantly higher violent crime rates than most developed countries, particularly due to firearm-related violence. Countries with strict firearm regulations experience far lower incidents. [Continue](#)

### Feeling Safe

Rank 33

The United States ranks 33rd among countries with populations over five million people. According to the Gallup 2025 Global Safety Report, 71% of U.S. adults said they feel safe walking alone at night in their city or area in 2024. This is one of the lowest figures Gallup has recorded for the United States since it began tracking this measure in 2006. [Continue](#)

### Corruption Perception

Rank 18

In 2023, the United States ranked 24th globally (includes small countries) The United States' score reflects concerns including: money in politics, lobbying practices perceived as corrupt, lack of transparency in campaign finance, selective enforcement of anti-corruption laws, and weaknesses in protecting whistleblowers. [Continue](#)

## Freedom

### Freedom of Expression

**Rank 23**

The United States ranks 23rd among the top 35 countries with the highest Freedom of Expression, with a score of 71%. In 2023, Freedom House rated the United States as 'Free' with a score of 83/100 overall, but noted increasing threats to freedom of expression through political pressure on journalists and social media censorship debates. [Continue](#)

### Freedom of Speech

**Rank 25**

The United States is ranked 25th among the top 35 countries with populations over 5 million with the highest freedom of speech, with a score of 70/100. This ranking reflects several key factors.

Despite the First Amendment providing some of the strongest formal legal protections for free speech in the world, the United States has seen a decline in its press freedom ranking in recent years. [Continue](#)

### Freedom of Press

**Rank 31**

The United States currently ranks 31 out of the top 35 countries with populations over 5 million people in the RSF World Press Freedom Index 2023, with a score of 61.23. The United States ranking reflects ongoing concerns about press freedom, including hostility toward journalists, concentration of media ownership, economic pressures on local news, legal threats such as subpoenas against journalists, [Continue](#)

## Economic Indicators

### Consumer Prices (CPI)

**Rank >35**

U.S. inflation has fluctuated more sharply in recent years than in many European and Asian economies. Countries like Switzerland and Japan maintain more stable long-term CPI trends through tighter monetary controls and lower consumption volatility. [Continue](#)

### Unemployment Rate

**Rank 25**

The United States generally maintains lower unemployment than most OECD nations. Its flexible labor market promotes faster job creation, though sometimes at the expense of job stability and social protections common in Western Europe. [Continue](#)

## **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**

**Rank 1**

The U.S. has the world's largest GDP, far surpassing other high-income nations. However, countries such as China and India demonstrate faster long-term growth trajectories due to population size and industrial expansion. [Continue](#)

## **GDP per Capita**

**Rank 6**

America ranks high globally but is surpassed by countries like Luxembourg, Switzerland, Norway, and Ireland. These countries benefit from specialized industries, smaller populations, and favorable tax regimes. [Continue](#)

## **Total Factor Productivity (TFP)**

**Rank 3**

U.S. productivity growth remains strong compared with other developed nations, driven by technological innovation and advanced supply chains. However, productivity gains have slowed in recent years, while nations such as South Korea show accelerating efficiency improvements. [Continue](#)

## **Housing**

### **Affordable Housing**

**Rank 35**

The United States ranks 35th on this list with approximately 43% of its population having access to affordable housing in 2023. The United States ranks near the bottom of this list primarily due to a combination of factors: [Continue](#)

### **Interest Rates: Home Mortgages**

**Rank 28**

Mortgage rates in the U.S. tend to be higher than those in Western Europe, where many countries maintain regulated, subsidized, or government-backed lending programs. High U.S. rates contribute significantly to housing affordability challenges. [Continue](#)

## **International Security**

### **Military Budget**

**Rank >35**

The United State per-capita military spending is among the highest globally. In 2023 the United States spent roughly \$2,300 per person on defense due to global force deployment, nuclear deterrence, research and development of advanced weapons systems, global military bases, intelligence operations, and treaty obligations with allied nations The remaining questions are: How effective has been this spending at to what extent has it sacrificed spending on health, education, and other social and economic indicators of wellbeing of its citizens. [Continue](#)