

Jobs & Opportunity Index (JOI), October 2017

A Mixed Report for the Wrong Reasons

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Covering a two-month span, the RI Center for Freedom & Prosperity's Jobs & Opportunity Index (JOI) for October includes new numbers for eight of 12 datapoints, leaving the Ocean State in 49th place, nationally. The results are somewhat mixed, with some improved and some worsened, but it isn't clear that the improvements indicate positive changes rather than peculiarities of the data and a reflection of the state's ongoing problems with its Unified Health Infrastructure Project (UHIP).

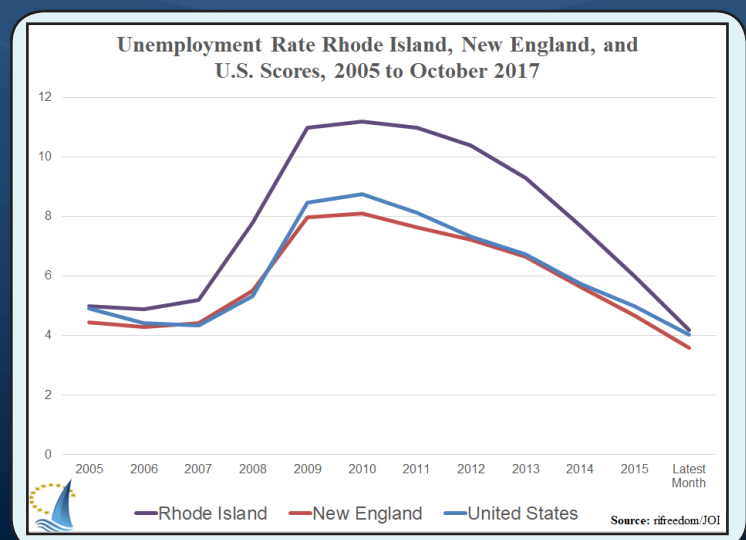
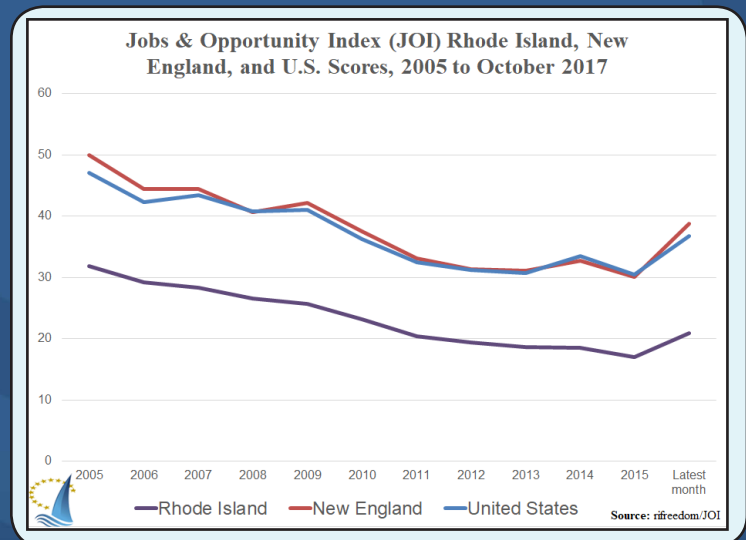
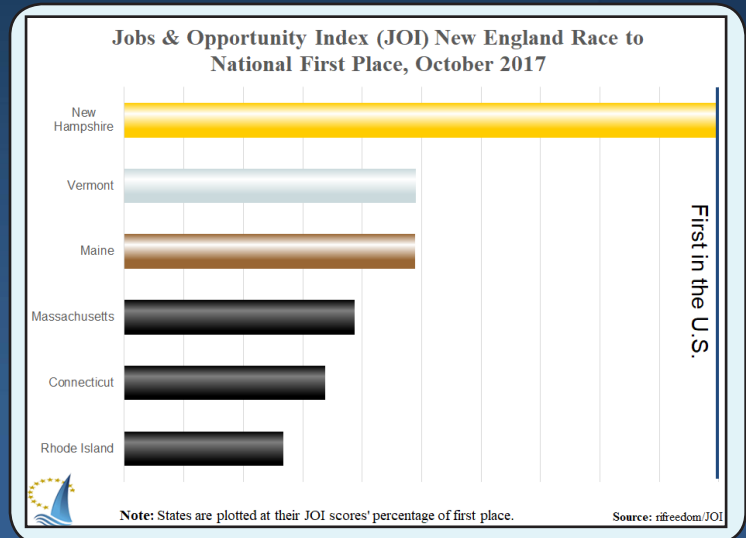
Employment was down 1,457 from the previously recorded number, while labor force fell 1,920. Also negative was the 3,900 drop in RI-based jobs, suggesting that it isn't just a quirk of the survey. Medicaid continued its climb, although the 443-person increase wasn't as high as in past months. One of the apparent improvements came via SNAP (food stamps), with a 392-enrollee drop, but the state's well-reported problems providing the benefit may indicate that the decrease isn't based on Rhode Islanders' need, but on the government's incompetence.

Also on the positive side, long-term unemployment, marginally attached workers, and people working only part-time involuntarily all fell (by 1,800, 400, and 3,100, respectively). However, these results could derive from the survey methodology and by workers' just giving up, as seen in the labor force reduction.

The first chart at right shows Rhode Island still in the last position in New England, 49th in the country, while New Hampshire remained 1st. In their close back and forth, Vermont edged out Maine, putting them in 16th and 17th place, respectively. Massachusetts stayed put, at 31st, while Connecticut fell three spots to 39th.

The second chart shows the gap between RI and New England and the U.S. on JOI. In both cases, RI's gap worsened. Switching to the official unemployment rate, RI's gap slimmed slightly. Results for the three underlying JOI factors were:

- **Job Outlook Factor** (optimism that adequate work is available): RI improved 12 places, to 21st.
- **Freedom Factor** (the level of work against reliance on welfare programs): RI remained 41st.
- **Prosperity Factor** (the financial motivation of income versus taxes): RI remained 47th.



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	JOI			Job Outlook Factor			Freedom Factor			Prosperity Factor		
	Rank	Trend	Score	Rank	Trend	Score	Rank	Trend	Score	Rank	Trend	Score
New Hampshire	1	👉	78.3	8	👎	7.9	4	👉	8.2	2	👉	9.3
Wyoming	2	👉	76.4	27	👎	5.8	1	👉	10.0	3	👉	8.9
Utah	3	👉	69.0	13	👉	7.3	2	👉	9.7	12	👉	7.7
North Dakota	4	👉	64.0	1	👉	10.0	3	👉	9.4	27	👉	6.7
South Dakota	5	👉	56.2	2	👉	8.2	8	👉	6.7	19	👉	7.3
Virginia	6	👉	52.4	25	👉	5.9	6	👉	7.5	18	👉	7.4
Kansas	7	👉	51.4	16	👎	7.1	7	👉	7.4	23	👉	6.9
Idaho	8	👉	48.0	12	👎	7.4	12	👍	5.5	14	👉	7.6
Colorado	9	👍	46.0	9	👉	7.9	15	👍	4.9	16	👉	7.5
Iowa	10	👎	45.8	5	👉	8.1	14	👍	5.1	20	👉	7.2
Nebraska	11	👉	44.1	7	👎	8.0	5	👉	7.8	44	👉	5.4
South Carolina	12	👉	43.7	19	👍	6.4	28	👉	4.2	4	👉	8.7
Montana	13	👉	42.1	20	👎	6.3	27	👉	4.2	6	👉	8.4
Hawaii	14	👉	41.3	15	👉	7.1	26	👎	4.2	11	👉	7.8
Wisconsin	15	👉	41.3	11	👍	7.4	10	👉	5.7	32	👉	6.4
Vermont	16	👍	38.4	4	👍	8.1	23	👉	4.4	28	👉	6.6
Maine	17	👉	38.3	24	👎	5.9	24	👉	4.3	13	👉	7.6
Alaska	18	👎	38.2	50	👉	4.1	40	👎	3.7	1	👉	10.0
Texas	19	👉	38.1	23	👎	5.9	17	👉	4.9	21	👉	7.1
Alabama	20	👉	37.8	30	👍	5.6	36	👉	4.0	7	👉	8.3
Oklahoma	21	👉	37.5	17	👉	6.7	34	👍	4.0	17	👉	7.5
Indiana	22	👉	37.1	3	👍	8.2	16	👉	4.9	35	👉	6.1
Maryland	23	👉	36.6	28	👎	5.8	18	👍	4.9	25	👉	6.8
Arizona	24	👉	34.1	39	👍	5.0	39	👍	3.7	8	👉	8.1
North Carolina	25	👍	33.0	29	👎	5.8	20	👍	4.8	33	👉	6.4
Georgia	26	👎	32.5	36	👎	5.2	22	👎	4.6	30	👉	6.5
Missouri	27	👎	32.4	14	👍	7.1	11	👉	5.5	45	👉	5.3
Washington	28	👍	32.3	32	👍	5.5	29	👍	4.1	24	👉	6.9
Nevada	29	👎	32.2	49	👉	4.2	30	👎	4.1	15	👉	7.6
Oregon	30	👉	31.4	26	👎	5.9	42	👉	3.6	22	👉	7.0
Massachusetts	31	👉	30.3	18	👉	6.4	19	👍	4.8	41	👉	5.6
Michigan	32	👍	30.0	35	👎	5.3	35	👎	4.0	31	👉	6.5
Florida	33	👍	29.9	43	👍	4.8	33	👉	4.1	26	👉	6.8
Mississippi	34	👎	29.8	46	👎	4.7	47	👎	3.2	10	👉	7.8
New Jersey	35	👉	29.0	41	👎	4.9	13	👎	5.4	43	👉	5.4
West Virginia	36	👍	28.2	44	👎	4.7	49	👉	2.7	9	👉	7.9
Pennsylvania	37	👍	27.4	38	👉	5.0	32	👉	4.1	34	👉	6.1
Tennessee	38	👍	27.1	22	👍	6.0	37	👉	3.9	37	👉	5.8
Connecticut	39	👎	26.4	47	👎	4.7	21	👎	4.8	42	👉	5.5
Minnesota	40	👉	26.4	6	👍	8.0	9	👉	6.4	49	👉	3.8
New Mexico	41	👉	26.4	48	👉	4.3	50	👉	2.3	5	👉	8.7
Illinois	42	👉	25.6	40	👎	4.9	31	👎	4.1	38	👉	5.7
California	43	👉	25.2	45	👍	4.7	45	👉	3.3	29	👉	6.6
New York	44	👉	23.5	31	👎	5.5	46	👍	3.2	40	👉	5.7
Ohio	45	👉	23.1	34	👎	5.4	25	👍	4.2	46	👉	4.9
Kentucky	46	👉	23.0	33	👍	5.4	44	👉	3.3	39	👉	5.7
Arkansas	47	👉	22.6	10	👎	7.7	43	👉	3.3	48	👉	4.5
Louisiana	48	👉	21.2	42	👍	4.9	48	👉	2.8	36	👉	5.9
Rhode Island	49	👉	20.9	21	👍	6.2	41	👉	3.6	47	👉	4.8
Delaware	50	👉	13.8	37	👎	5.0	38	👍	3.7	50	👉	3.1