

Series/track > RI Competitiveness Report Card > 2015

When the RI Center for Freedom & Prosperity began compiling its annual Competitiveness Report Card for Rhode Island in 2012, the idea was to show how we, as a state, were doing, compared with our New England neighbors and the country as a whole. That first year, the report card showed five Fs and five Ds. Now, in its fourth iteration, with various changes of methodology and some new categories, the total isn't much better, with two Fs, eight Ds, and one C, as shown in the first chart at right.

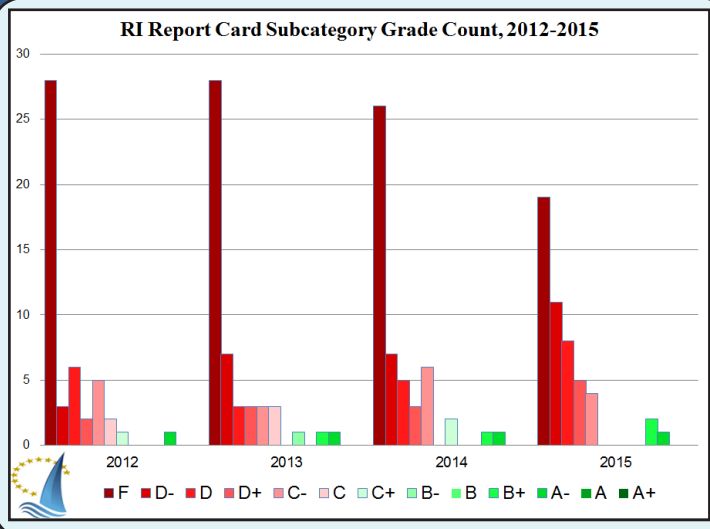
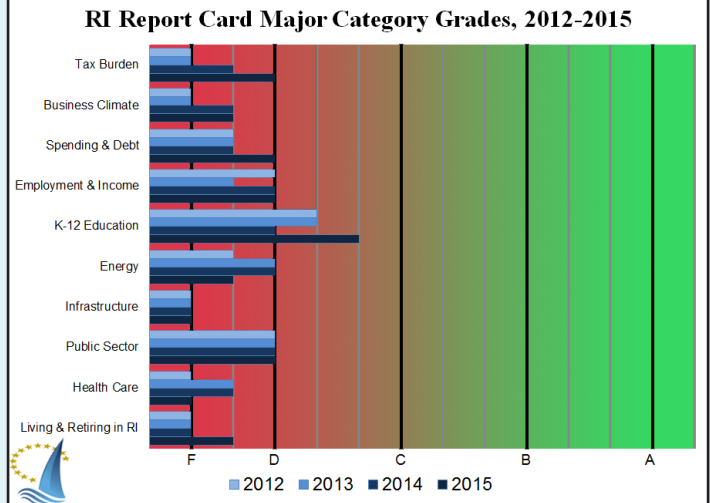
Looking at the subcategories that result in those grades shows some minor shifting from F to Ds, but the overall picture has not improved substantially in a way that indicates changing prospects. See the second chart at right.

These results put RI at the back of the New England pack as shown in the table below (organized by overall grade point average, from left to right).

Putting those results alongside the Center's experience dealing with state government on a variety of issues, over the years, the metaphor of a graded report card seems to miss the mark in an important way: These grades are not how *we* are doing; they are a reflection of what insiders, cronies, and special interests are doing *to us*.

While Rhode Island government is failing the people of Rhode Island, the lackadaisical attitude about improving the state's performance suggests that it is not failing everybody. The insiders and special interests are benefiting from these results, and they have tremendous incentive to keep them going.

Although it would go too far to say that they want Rhode Island to fail and Rhode Islanders to suffer, the people doing this to the Ocean State clearly don't consider success and opportunity for others to be a priority. Any good that can be done for the people of Rhode Island is hindered by the one overriding requirement that those within the system must continue to get theirs first.



| | Rhode Island | Connecticut | Vermont | Massachusetts | Maine | New Hampshire |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|---------|---------------|-------|---------------|
| Tax Burden | D | D- | D | C- | D+ | B |
| Business Climate | D- | D | D | B | D | B- |
| Spending & Debt | D | D- | D+ | D- | C- | B- |
| Employment & Income | D | B- | C+ | C | D+ | A- |
| K-12 Education | C- | C- | D | C+ | C+ | C+ |
| Energy | D- | F | D+ | D- | C | C- |
| Infrastructure | F | D- | D+ | F | B | C |
| Public Sector | D | C+ | D | C | C | B- |
| Health Care | F | D- | C | F | C+ | C+ |
| Living & Retiring in RI | D- | D- | D+ | C- | C | C+ |
| GPA | D- | D | D+ | D+ | C- | C+ |