

# 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, usually in January traditionally fulfills this duty of the President of the United States. However, most, if not all U.S. Presidents, do not candidly report the “State of the Union”, but rather use the occasion to boast of their accomplishments. leaving the Congress and the public in the dark as to what programs and measures that are “necessary and expedient” to improve the lives of U.S. citizens.

This Report is an assessment, without political rhetoric of the United States’s performance across economic, and social areas which demonstrates the wellbeing or lack of wellbeing of its citizens compared with other advanced nations. Later we will describe what measures are being taken by Federal, State and municipal governments. And when possible suggest measures or programs to be taken.

Although the United States demonstrates strength in innovation and economic capacity, it continues to trail nations in the wellbeing of its citizens, regardless of political parties and political leadership,

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## Health and Well-Being Indicators

### 1. World Happiness Report

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

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### 2. Life Expectancy Rate

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.

### 3. Suicide Rate

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.

### 4. Access to Healthcare

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.

### 5. Access to Mental Health Supports

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.

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

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.

### 7. Percentage of People Who Feel Socially Connected

Social connectedness—regular engagement with friends, family, and community has been declining in the U.S.

The U.S. ranks **below most Western European nations** and far below Nordic countries, where strong social networks and state-supported community infrastructure foster connections. The U.S. also reports higher rates of loneliness compared with Australia, Canada, and Germany.

### 8. Access to Affordable Child Care

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.

## **9. Environmental Quality Exposure: Air and Noise**

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.

## **10. Deaths from a Particular Health Cause**

Whether examining heart disease, cancer, or opioid-related deaths, the United States tends to exceed mortality rates of Western Europe and East Asia, driven by chronic conditions, lifestyle risk factors, and healthcare access disparities.

## **11. Noncommunicable Disease Indicators**

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.

## **12. Morbidity Inequality Metrics**

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.

## **13. Prevalence of Obesity**

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.

## **14. Alcohol Use**

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.

## **15. Drug Price Index**

Prescription drug prices in the United States are the highest in the world. Other developed nations regulate pharmaceutical pricing, resulting in significantly lower costs for equivalent medications.

## 16. Doctors per Capita

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.

## Education and Social Indicators

### 17. Graduation Rates: High School

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.

### 18. Graduation Rates: College

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.

### 19. Education

**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.  
[See More](#)

**Quality: PISA Test Results**

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.

[See More](#)

**Education Access: Country Cost Comparisons**

Over 60 countries have free or lost cost college tuition. The United States is not one of them.

[See More](#)

### 20. Persons Below Poverty Line

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.

## **21. Income Inequality**

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.

## **22. National Violent Crime Rate**

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.

## **Economic Indicators**

### **23. Consumer Price Index (CPI)**

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.

### **24. Unemployment Rate**

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.

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

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.

### **26. GDP per Capita**

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.

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

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.

## **28. Interest Rates: Home Mortgages**

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.

## **29. National Mortgage Statistics**

American households carry higher mortgage debt levels than many European and Asian countries. Nations like Germany, with a strong rental sector, have far lower mortgage penetration and more stable housing markets.

## **Conclusion**

The United States remains a global economic powerhouse with robust job creation. Yet, compared with other high-income nations, the country faces notable challenges in improving the health and wellbeing of its citizens.

There have been courageous elected officials that have resisted lobbyists, and other forces and have sought to improve the lives of others, sometimes costing them their careers. For the United States to rise from its failures, the United States will require more woman and men like those past courageous elected officials.