

Report: Okla. homeowners pay lower property taxes

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Oklahomans continue to benefit from low to moderate property taxes, a new report from the Tax Foundation shows.

Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the tax foundation's latest report – Tax Foundation Fiscal Fact No. 192 – ranked 790 high-population counties across the country according to property tax measures. A ranking of 1 represented the highest tax burden, while the ranking of 790 represented the lowest.

Tax Foundation officials said the report showed little had changed from last year.

“The rankings have changed little from last year's, where the Northeast, specifically New York and New Jersey, dominated the highest-taxed counties,” said Gerald Prante, the foundation's senior economist.

According to the report, homeowners in the Northeast and select states in the Midwest pay the most in property taxes, with the highest taxes being in New York and New Jersey. Louisiana and a good portion of the South tend to have the lowest property taxes on homeowners.

In Oklahoma, the rankings hovered toward the lower end of the scale.

According to the report, Oklahoma County ranked 599th in the list of median property taxes paid on homes, and 412th in the report on taxes as a percentage of home value. Oklahoma County ranked 602nd out of 790 in taxes as a percentage of income.

Other counties in the state had similar results.

Tulsa County was listed as 505th on the list of median property taxes paid on homes and ranked 324th in taxes as a percentage of home value. Tulsa County was listed 540th out of 790 in the list of taxes as a percentage of income.

Comanche County was ranked 680th in the list of median property taxes paid on homes and 488th in taxes as a percentage of home value. The county was listed 684th in taxes as a percentage of income.

Cleveland County was listed 525th in median property taxes paid on homes and 390th in taxes as a percentage of home value. Cleveland County was listed 598th out of 790 in taxes as a percentage of income.

The low ranking didn't come as a surprise to Ron Cupp, vice president of The State Chamber.

“It doesn't surprise me,” he said. “Historically the state's ranking on property taxes has been low.”

Yet even with the low ranking, Cupp said Sooner State residents are not fans of the tax.

“Property tax is a unique deal,” he said. “Nobody really likes them. It's a little different than a sales or an income tax. You want to stir up a hornet's nest, just try raising the property tax.”

Still, compared to other parts of the country, Oklahomans have it better than their neighbors to the north.

Across the country, the top 10 counties in median real estate taxes paid for 2008 are, from 1 to 10, Westchester County, N.Y.; Nassau County, N.Y.; Hunterdon County, N.J.; Bergen County, N.J.; Rockland County, N.Y.; Essex County, N.J.; Somerset County, N.J.; Morris County, N.J.; Passaic County and Putnam County, N.Y.

In Westchester County, N.Y., that tax burden is almost \$9,000. The national median is \$1,897. In Oklahoma County the tax was \$1,048.