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## What is the best state motto

If you watch the national news on a semi-regular basis, chances are you hear frequent references to the U.S. State Department. This important federal agency has its figurative hands in much of America's interactions on the international scene.What Is the U.S. Department of State?The U.S. Department of State is the agency in charge of overseeing how and when America interacts with other countries. Responsible for managing America's foreign affairs, the State Department is the country's oldest executive-level agency. The foreign service officers and diplomats in the State Department oversee America's business relations, government initiatives, immigration and individual travel issues. The State Department also oversees other federal departments' international activities, including the Department of Homeland Security, the Defense Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and the U.S. Agency for International Development.History of the U.S. State DepartmentPresident George Washington and Congress approved legislation to establish a Department of Foreign Affairs in 1789. A few months later in September of that year, the name of this agency was officially changed to the Department of State. Duties of the agency at that time included taking the census, maintaining the Great Seal and managing the U.S. Mint. It wasn't until many decades later that the State Department was placed in charge of foreign affairs.Thomas Jefferson was the first Secretary of State. Jefferson's approach was decidedly domestic, preferring to focus on exploring areas of North America. Taking a neutral stance in European conflicts and concentrating on enlarging America, foreign affairs were mostly on the back burner for the country through the end of Reconstruction after the Civil War. It was in the late nineteenth century when America began taking a greater interest in the international scene, applying some force to protect international interests, notes AllGov.Responsibilities of the U.S. State DepartmentThe main responsibility of the U.S. State Department is to promote the country's foreign policy internationally. This overarching job involves many connected responsibilities, including security measures, cultural interests, trade and commerce. The State Department works with corporations and individuals representing foreign governments, non-government organizations and private citizens.The Secretary of StateThe secretary of state is an appointed cabinet member who's the third-highest-ranking executive branch member and also fourth in line to the office of the president. The secretary of state serves as the president's main foreign policy adviser, also representing the United States abroad. The secretary of state sits on the National Security Council as well.Other Important U.S. DepartmentsAside from the Department of State, the president relies on other departments to carry out official responsibilities. The U.S. Department of the Treasury is in charge of printing paper currency and minting coins. The Department of Defense provides the military force required for the country's security. The Department of Justice enforces the laws of the U.S. government. MORE FROM QUESTIONSANSWERED.NET The best of The Saturday Evening Post in your inbox! State mottos are created to reflect a mission or a mood; in a few words, they should tell us something about that state. The best do, and the worst . . . are just bad. We look at all the state mottos, putting a spotlight on the best, grudgingly accepting the middle, and mocking the worst. Maine is a state at the northeastern tip of the country, but what it really wants to do is direct. We suppose this could be a reference to the state's numerous lighthouses, but the Latin sounds more like the name of a Bond villain. They should get famous resident Stephen King to knock one out, maybe something like "Our state knows darkness" or "We all float up here." With all due respect to Big Sky Country, "Gold and silver" isn't trying very hard. Granted, Yukon Cornelius probably loves this motto, but it's still random minerals found underground or in caves. New Mexico didn't make their motto, "Bats," did they? In retrospect, we were a little hard on Montana. ANY state could say "Industry." Going this generic, you'd think that Michigan's would be "Cars" and California's would be "Movies" and Florida's would be "Theme Parks." Tennessee gets one placement higher than Utah because they decided to name TWO things that almost any other state could claim. If you went Tennessee Generic, then Indiana would be "Racing and Basketball," Nevada would be "Gambling and Sand," and Florida would expand to "Theme Parks and Retirees." Yes, this motto was adopted in the 1700s, and yes, it's about defeating despots. But when your state housed the capital of the Confederacy and your motto is the thing that John Wilkes Booth shouted after shooting Abraham Lincoln, it might not be a good look anymore. You could do worse with one-word abstract ideas than "Hope," but it doesn't seem like a landmark of effort. You'd think that Rhode Island, being the smallest state, would want the longest motto. Maybe a quote from native son H.P. Lovecraft? Something like "That is not dead which can eternal lie, And with strange aeons even death may die," or "The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown," or "Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn." It's not the worst thing in the world to tie your motto to the phrase uttered when gold was discovered, hastening the rush to the area and the ultimate settling of today's California. But it's not super-inspired either. Possible updates could include "World's Fifth Largest Economy" or "Another Year without Falling into the Ocean." We're sure that there's a great context behind this quote, but it sounds a bit more like a threat from Dr. Frankenstein than an expression of state pride. Okay, that's just cheating. This motto shows a little bit more of an effort. Not a lot. But more. Kentucky adopted its Latin motto in 2002, leading to the question, "Why does Kentucky think that it needs two mottos?" Here's another apology to Montana, and one to Utah. Obviously, this decision was made when someone was looking at the motto of the entire United States. Or a dollar. This motto, with its alternate translations, is totally fine, if a bit absolutist. "God enriches" has a broader meaning, conveying the idea of making everything better, rather than just making people richer. Take a note, Montana. Idaho's motto represents continuation, the idea of ongoing existence. This is much, much better than any of its various slogans that include the word potatoes. You have to give this one credit for making itself available to two different emphases. The general one would be, "Yes, the government should be ruled by the people." The second interpretation makes it sound like something you'd hear at a metal concert: "Are you having a good time tonight in Little Rock? All right! The People Rule!" This feels like a pretty standard kind of motto. It's somewhat pugnacious, but a little fighting spirit isn't a bad thing. So is having two mottos going to be a thing now? The "pleasant peninsula" one is nice and fitting, but choosing "I will defend" for the state that's the home of the Detroit Lions is fairly questionable. (Fine, send us letters; it won't change 2008.) Another perfectly fine "we protect our home" style of motto. Still, we think "Everybody loves to spell our name" might be better. This one sort of grows on you. The central idea, which is that it's better to be something rather to appear or pretend to be something, is a good one, but it's almost too philosophical for a state motto. This one and "Industry" are in two different categories entirely. Not bad, but it also sounds a little bit like a tagline for a horror movie. "Coming this summer ... Jordan Peele remakes ... The Blob! It grows as it goes!" This pair has a great English lead with "Freedom and Unity," which is about as solid and patriotic a state motto as you can get. However, the second motto undercuts the "unity" with some shameless self-promotion. "We're all for unity, but we hope that our spot on the flag is just a little brighter than yours." There is absolutely nothing wrong with promoting friendship in your motto. We're just disappointed because this is Texas. No "Remember the Alamo"? No "Everything's bigger" in Latin? No "Who shot J.R.?" You let us down, Lone Star State. Oregon brings us a pair of head-scratchers. The Union? Well, sure. But are you professing that you're part of the "Union" of states, that you're pro-Union, or that you just like the idea of marriage? Incidentally, everything that has wings flies with its own wings: if you don't have wings and want to fly, you can book that online. "Strength from the soil" has a pretty all-American ring, doesn't it? That other motto is actually a quote from Daniel Webster, the real-life Senator who inspired the character in the short story "The Devil and Daniel Webster" by Stephen Vincent Benét. That story was first published by, well, us in the October 24, 1936 issue of The Saturday Evening Post. This had to go in the middle. Because it's . . . yeah. For a state that occasionally debates making "Born to Run" the state song (even though the state still doesn't have an official state song), we have to say that we're disappointed in the utter lack of Springsteen in the motto. "Liberty and prosperity" is good, but really, any state could pick that. No other state could claim "You ain't a beauty but, hey, you're alright" or "There's a darkness on the edge of town" or "Is a dream a lie if it don't come true/Or is it something worse?" Get with it, New Jersey. This is a good one, but we hear that it was originally going to be "All for our country, but the house gets 20 percent." If you listen really hard, you can hear Ben Affleck explaining this in his Good Will Hunting accent. "It's like we want peace, but we'll fight you. Fight you wicked hard. But if we got that peace, then we gotta be free, too. Right, Will? Say I'm right." We'll be honest: we're not quite sure we get this one. It probably one of those things that means well but actually says something mildly offensive, sort of like that one aunt of yours on Facebook. Very good, Land of Lincoln. That's exactly how this United States thing works. Congratulations, Illinois. Your state motto marks the debut of Constitutionsplaining. Simple, elegant, effective. Now if you could only do something about how long it takes to drive across you. This is another totally fine, patriotic-sounding motto, with the extra boost of "confidence" thrown in for good measure. Nevertheless, it's far less flashy than you'd expect from the home of Mardi Gras. We won't lie; this motto is awesome. That could be because it's also the motto for Starfleet in the Star Trek franchise. Either way, it originated in the works of the poet Virgil. Nice one, Kansas: carry on, wayward state. This one's interesting in that Minnesota adopted a state motto but never officially repealed its territorial motto; so, they use both. The French one is pretty on point, but the Latin one speaks of the future and westward expansion. That's a swell pair of complementary phrases. Not only is this a great state motto, it should probably be tattooed onto all incoming Congresspeople. Honestly, Nebraska could probably step up and claim some Springsteen, too. In this case, however, The Boss isn't needed. This is not only a great motto; it's a great reminder. This is appropriate for two strong reasons: It reflects the upward climb of New York City, both in impact and architecture, as it became one of the preeminent cities of the world. The other is because it was the catchphrase of the late, great, and thoroughly New York Stan Lee. The comics genius signed off his "Stan's Soapbox" with the phrase, frequently said it in public, and even got it into his cameo in Avengers: Age of Ultron. Good job, New York. It's a great sentiment, the spirit of which we've all probably heard from our mothers at one point. Can't you just picture young Oklahoma getting lectured by the original colonies? "Remember, Okie; hard work conquers all things." "Sure, Ma." "Good boy. Try not to spill any oil." "I know, Ma!" This is a good, strong motto, poetic in its original Latin and inspiring in its message. (What? They can't all be joke material.) We admit it: It's kind of weird. But it's also wildly sentimental, incorporating the mountaineer nickname and the notion of freedom at the same time. Credit Washington for adopting a territorial motto from the original inhabitants of the region. However, they still don't have an official state version. The phrase can also mean "Hope for the future." Let's be honest — everything sounds better in Hawaiian. For example, Hawaii's state fish, the reef triggerfish, is called the decidedly more awesome Humuhumunukunuaupua in the language. In terms of the motto itself, it manages to be spiritual, environmental, and wise all at once. We had to put this pretty high on the list for the ideology. But we get the feeling that Delaware wasn't trying too hard. Either that, or they were being gracious; if we were Delaware, we definitely would have chosen "First!" Georgia chose admirable qualities to list in its state motto. It also sounds like it could be a list of the better attributes for the cleric they just rolled for in a D&D game. In four words, this gets in everything that a good state motto should have. It has a strong controlling idea, imagery that ties it to its state, and an expression that could provoke inspiration. Plus, it's much better than the previously proposed, "Alaska: It's dark a lot." We like that Wyoming has a motto that reflects one of the great ideas of the country. It's also mildly ironic, given the disproportionate power that Wyoming's Electoral College votes have. Brief and to the point. Nice. Also, bonus points for not having anything to do with cheese. Okay, okay; we've cracked on other people for leaning on the easy sentiments. But this is Pennsylvania, home of Philadelphia and therefore the home of the Continental Congress. The building blocks of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution were assembled in this state; heck, both were written there. So we can make jokes about appropriating patriotism and so forth, but Pennsylvania has it backed up by more than 200 years of history. The idea behind this phrase rose to prominence in both the French and American Revolutions. Variations like "Give me liberty or give me death" pervaded the oration and editorials of the times. After the Revolutionary War, the state's most famous war hero was General John Stark. In 1809, upon declining a reunion request due to poor health, he wrote a toast and sent it to the celebrants. The first line was "Live free or die: Death is not the worst of evils." Thereafter, it became a popular phrase in the state before becoming the official motto. Comedian George Carlin once noted the stark difference in phrases that could be found on state license plates, highlighting the vast distance from New Hampshire's "Live free or die" to Idaho's "Famous potatoes;" Carlin allowed that the greater philosophical truth was probably closer to "Famous potatoes." Featured image: Shutterstock





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