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## Why We Prefer Connecticut

Laurence D. Cohen's Feb. 17 Other Opinion column "A Place For Every Liberal" featured his smugly sardonic tone at fever pitch. Whether he genuinely believes in the caricature of Connecticut that he depicts or whether he merely uses hyperbole as an instrument to provoke readers' irritation, his glib assertions should not go unanswered.

If Connecticut residents face higher taxes than do residents of most other states, this reflects at least in part a reasoned collective decision that government services are worth paying for. No doubt, anyone can point to a public program that she or he regards as unnecessary, or to a government operation that could be more efficient. But this is no less the case than in those paragons of progress that Mr. Cohen hails — including Nevada, South Dakota and Wyoming.

Few Connecticut taxpayers would trade our state, our per-capita income, our economic base, our work force, our health care system, our universities and public schools, our cultural life, our local communities or our government for those of Nevada, South Dakota or Wyoming.

Although tax rates — and how their burden is allocated — are clearly important, they are not an end in themselves. Recent reports have documented the Nissan Corp.'s concern that the addition of another auto assembly plant in low-tax Mississippi would exhaust that state's apparently limited supply of adequately trained workers.

In contrast, from Aetna and General Electric to United Technologies Corp., Connecticut is home to an array of companies that value highly the skills and capacity of their employees here. Those companies and those employees, in turn, value the quality of life that government services are meant to support.

This state must be doing something right. If Mr. Cohen would prefer to move to Wyoming or Mississippi or to establish a business there, he is free to exercise that choice. For the rest of us, Connecticut — warts and all — is an excellent place to live, work and raise our families.

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