



Are Alaska Native Children Really Responsible for Our Disappointing Test Scores?

An offensive narrative has been circulating that Alaska Native children are to blame for our state's low reading test scores. That narrative is not only extremely divisive and offensive – it is untrue.

Across the spectrum, Alaskan students underperform their peers in the vast majority of both 4th and 8th grade reading scores on the U.S. Department of Education's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Below is a long series of fascinating bar charts that point quickly to where Alaskan students actually stand in NAEP testing in reading. The bar charts compare the NAEP reading scores of all 50 states and the District of Columbia between 2003 and the most recent NAEP scores in 2017. Comparisons are made across a wide variety of data slices including economic status, students with disabilities and ethnicity.

It is important to note that a 10-point difference in NAEP test scores indicates roughly a one-school-year difference in student achievement.

Alaska is highlighted with red bars on the charts and the U.S. national average is indicated by green bars. Also included are orange bars indicating the test scores for Florida. Florida has led the nation in improving NAEP reading scores after adopting an extensive reading reform program in 2002. The state of Mississippi is also highlighted.

Mississippi adopted the Florida reading model in 2013 and has seen significant progress in a very short period of time. Not many people would guess that in 2017 Mississippi was above the US average in 4th grade reading for children who qualify for free-or-reduced lunch. That year, Mississippi was ahead of states like Wisconsin, Minnesota,

Washington, Oregon, Iowa and Maine in the low-income student category. Alaska was dead last in 2017– almost an entire school year in achievement behind Mississippi.

Mississippi is not highlighted in 8th grade scores because their reading program has not been in place long enough to have an impact on the 8th grade scores in 2017.

Some of the charts have fewer states listed. States are not listed when they have an inadequate number of students in a particular data subset to be statistically meaningful. For example: Mississippi in 2003 didn't have enough Hispanic students to register a large enough sample to be included in the comparison, but they did by 2017.

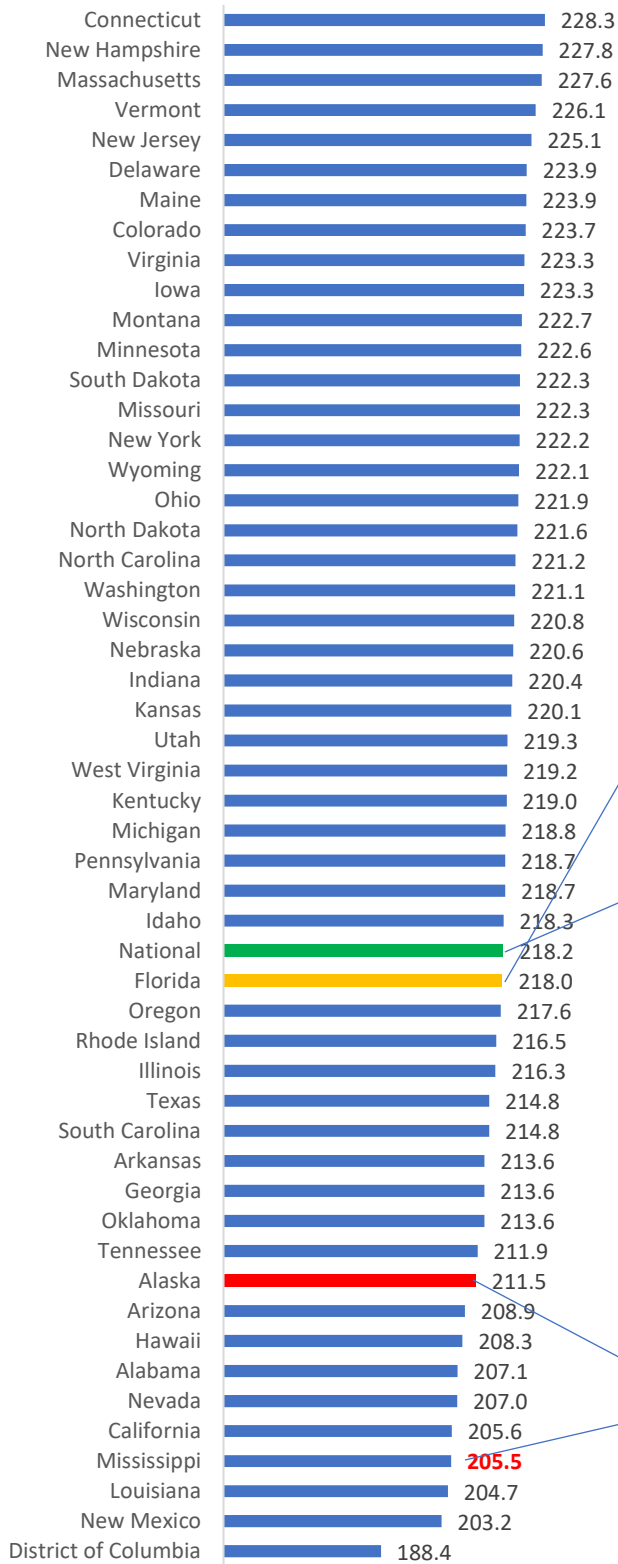
There was only one category in 2017 in which Alaskan students scored above average in NAEP reading – both our 4th and 8th grade Hispanic students. Black students in Alaska are above average in 4th grade reading but below average in 8th grade. The only other demographic that scored slightly above the US average was white 8th graders who qualify for free-or-reduced lunch. Alaska was below average in every other category and occupied the "dead last" position in 13 out of the 20 different measurements for 4th graders in 2017.

Test scores for Native Alaskan children are indeed disappointing relative to other American Indian/Native students in the U.S. But as these bar charts show, early childhood literacy in Alaska is at crisis proportions across the entire economic and ethnic spectrum.

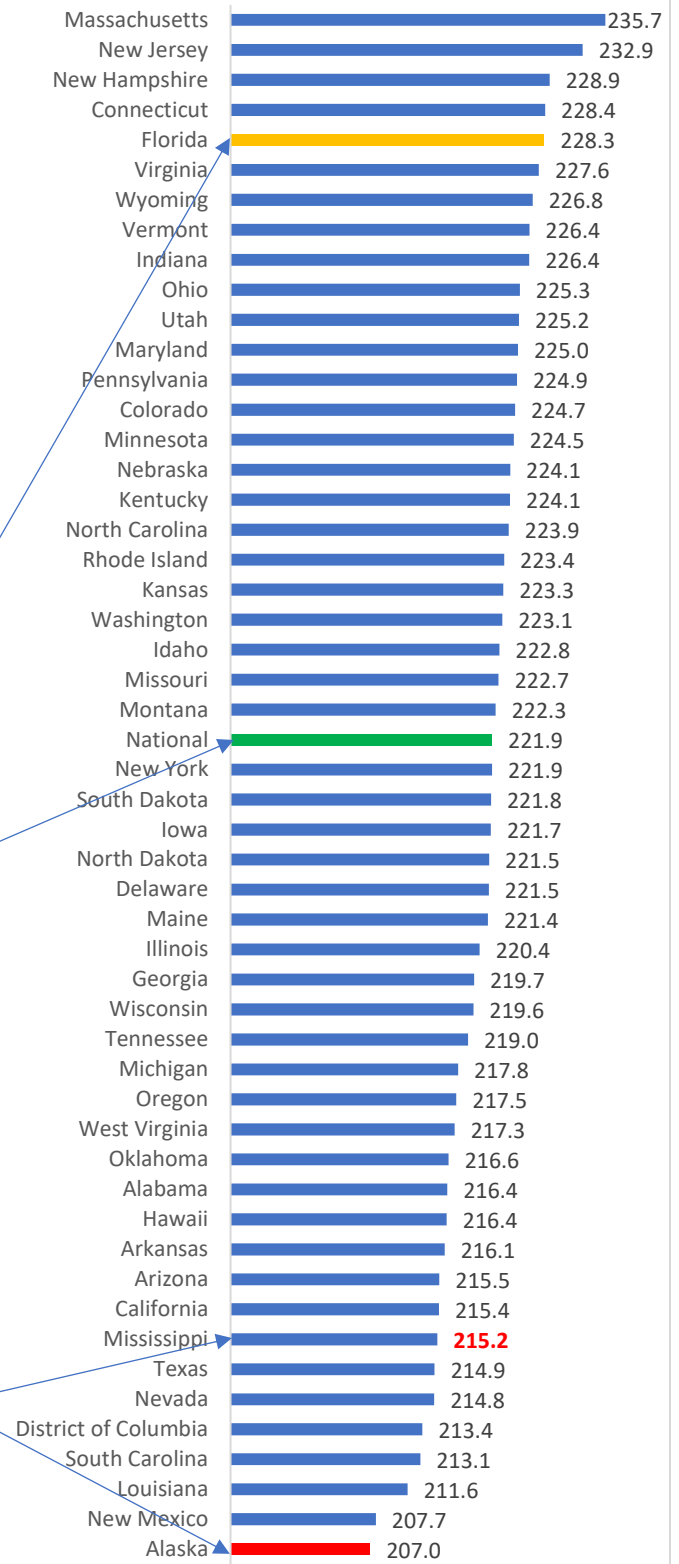
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<https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/ndecore/landing>

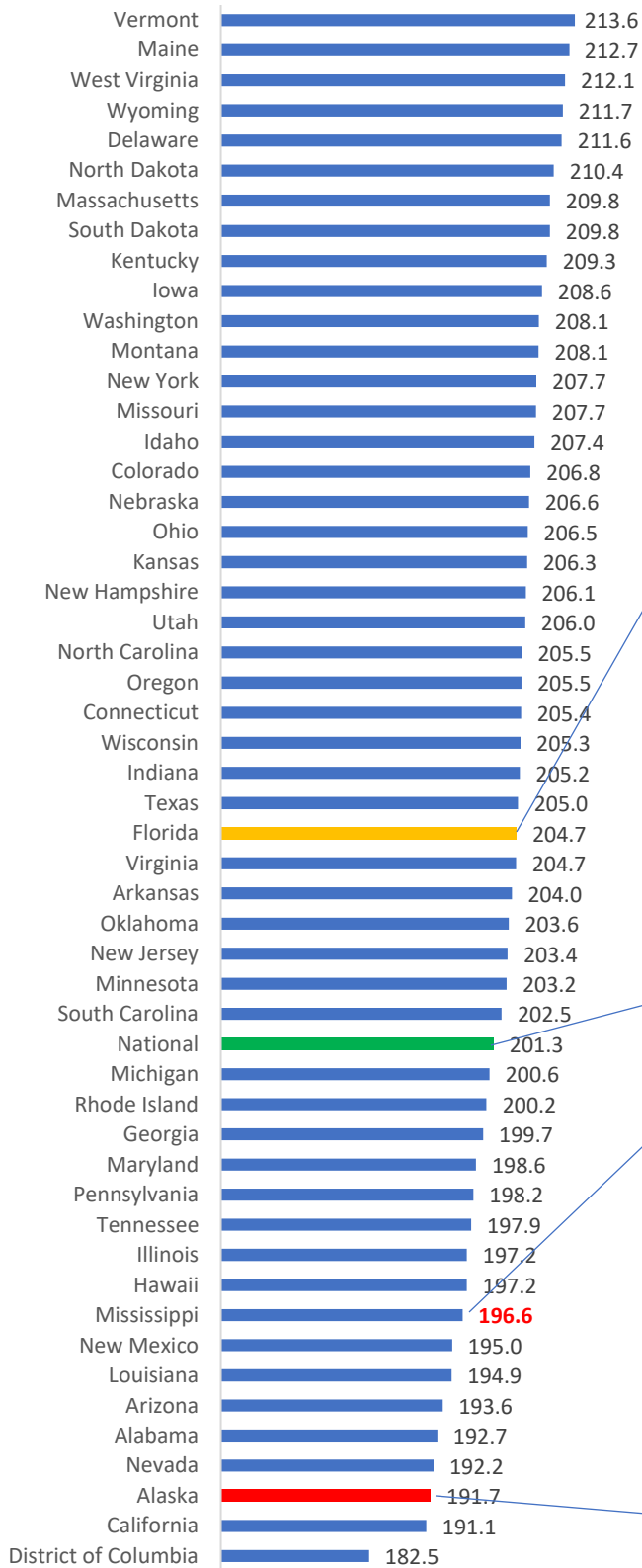
2003 NAEP 4th Grade Reading All Students



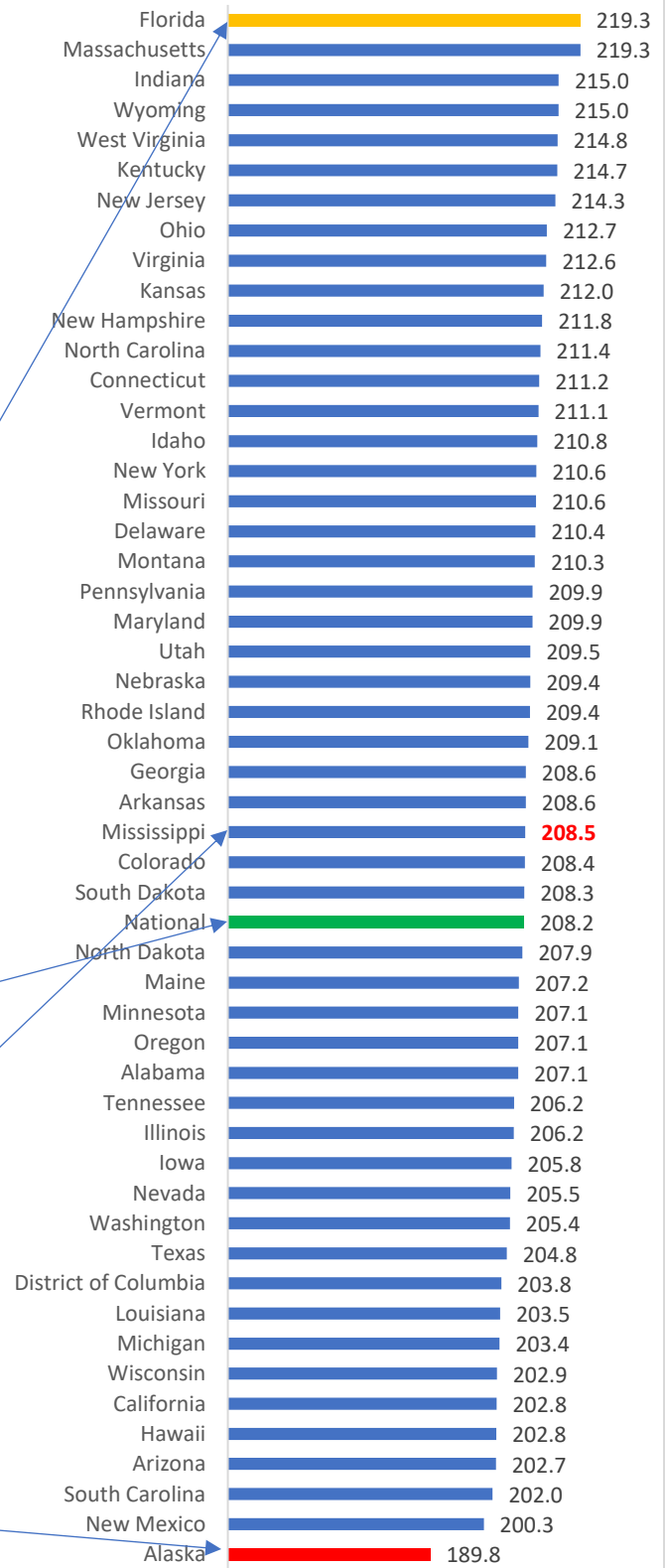
2017 NAEP 4th Grade Reading All Students



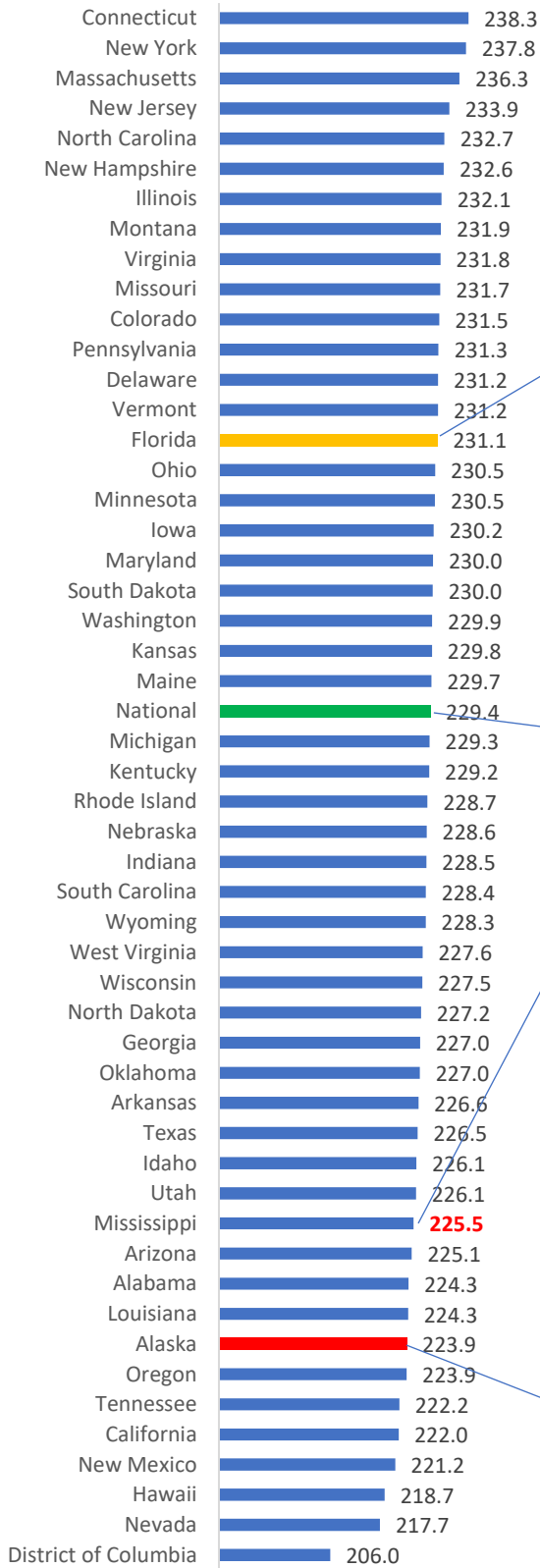
2003 NAEP 4th Grade Reading Free or Reduced Lunch



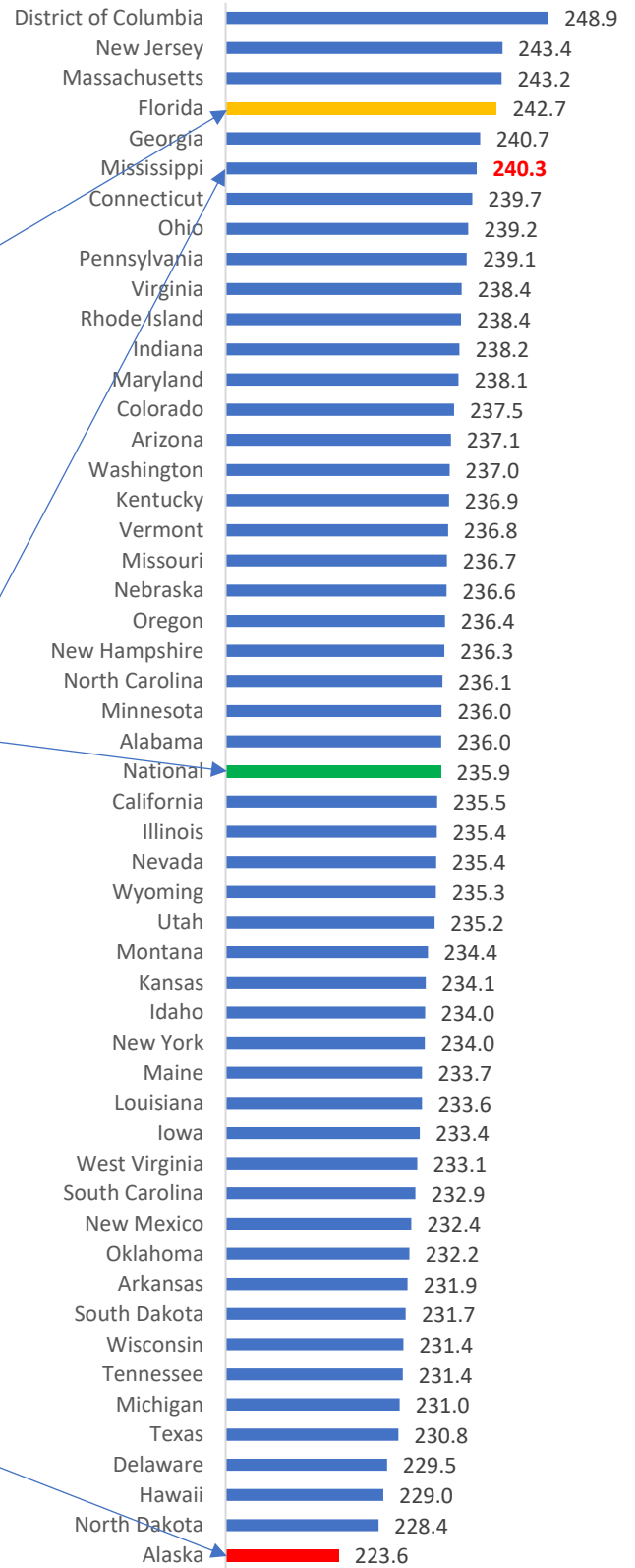
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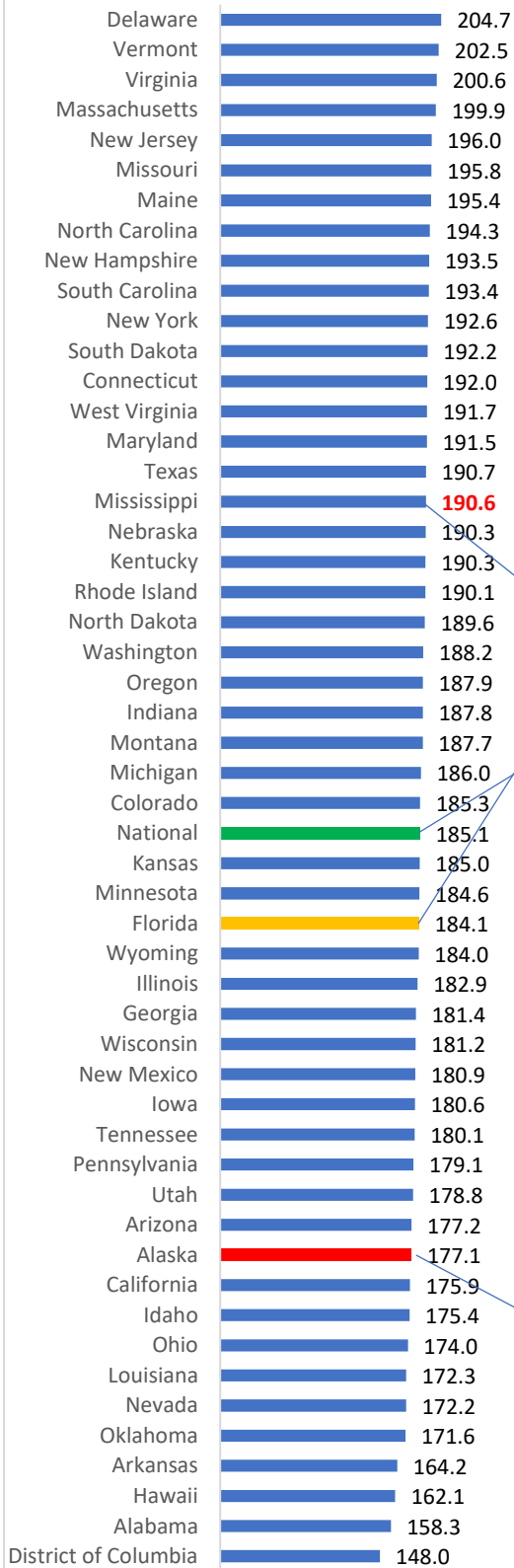
2003 NAEP 4th Grade Reading Non-Free or Reduced Lunch



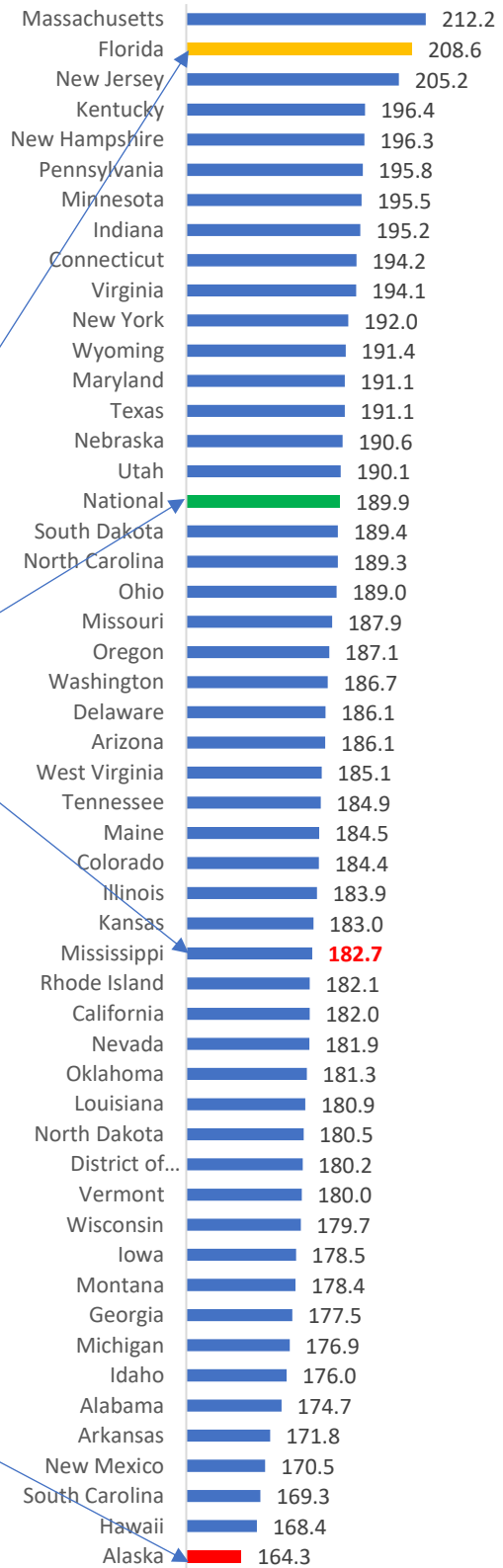
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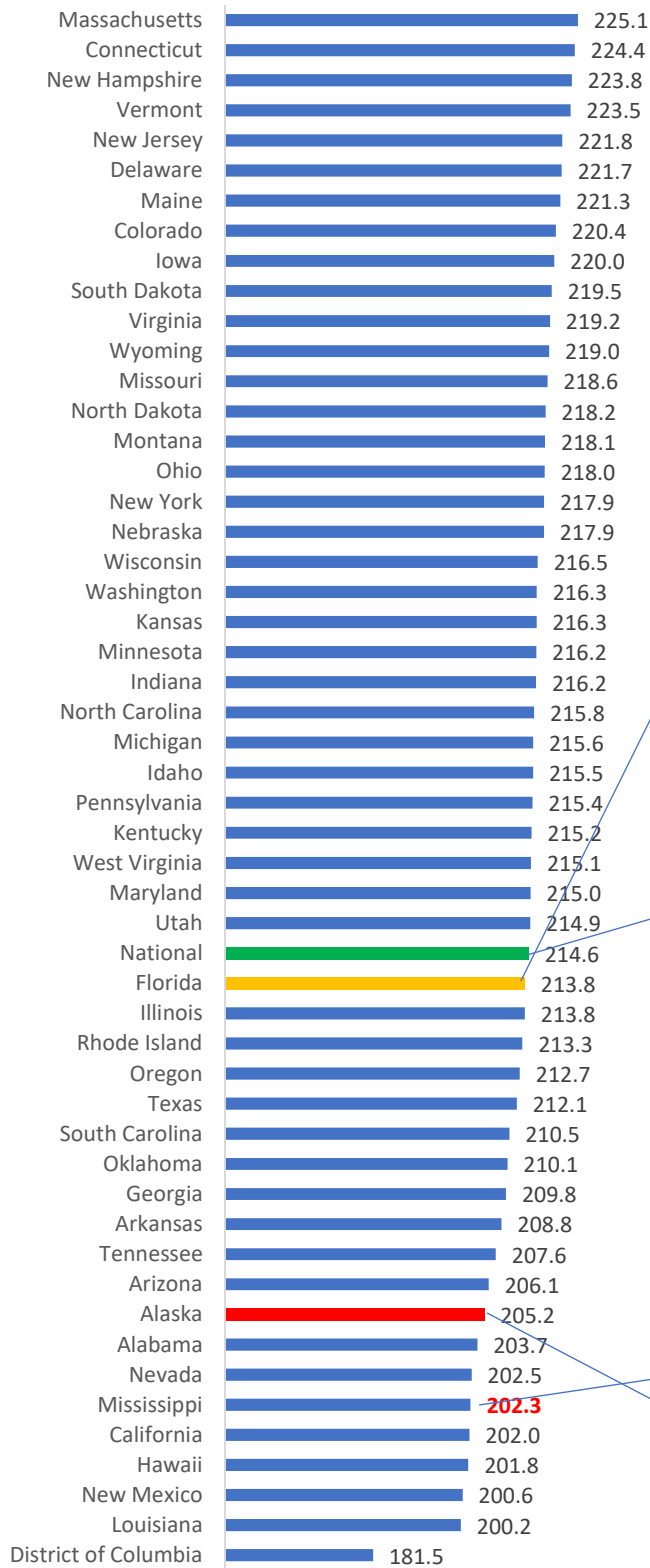
2003 NAEP 4th Grade Reading Students With Disabilities



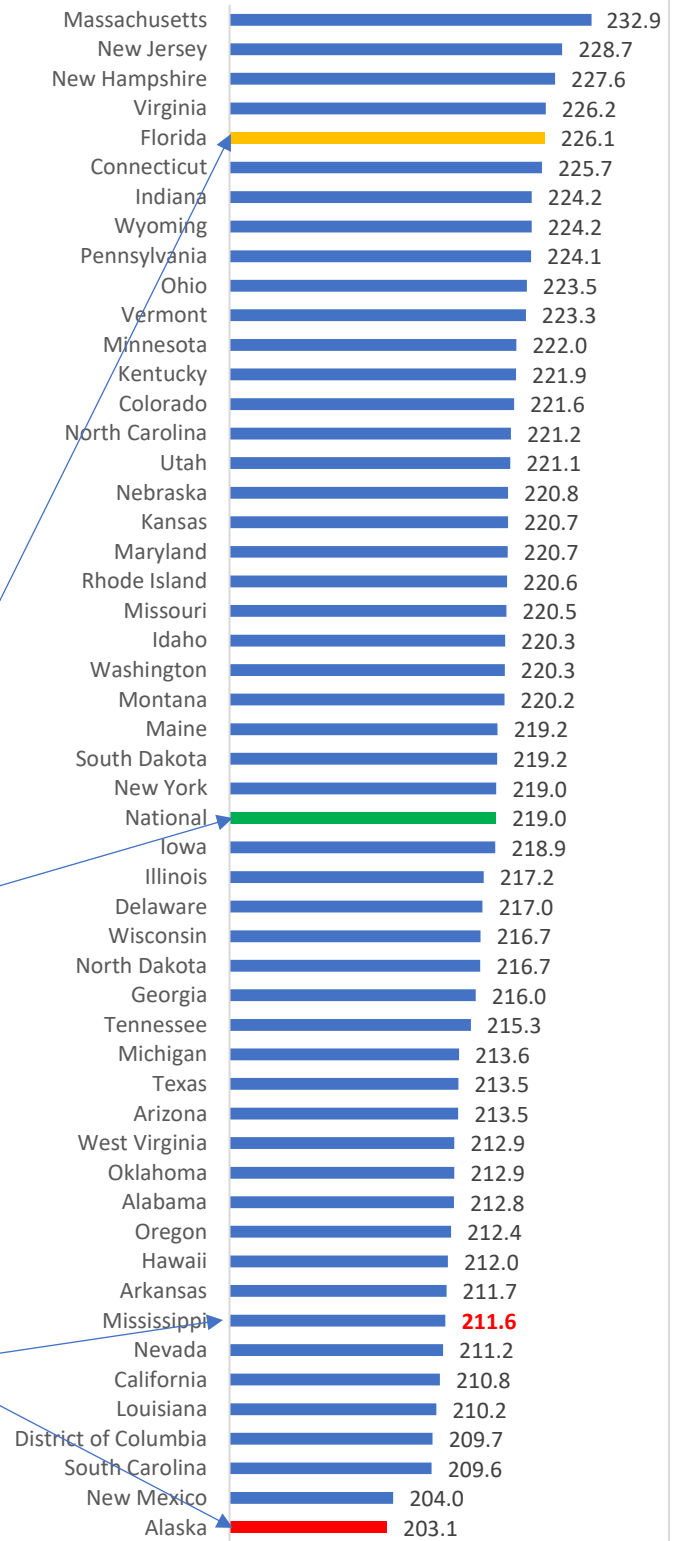
2017 NAEP 4th Grade Reading Students With Disabilities



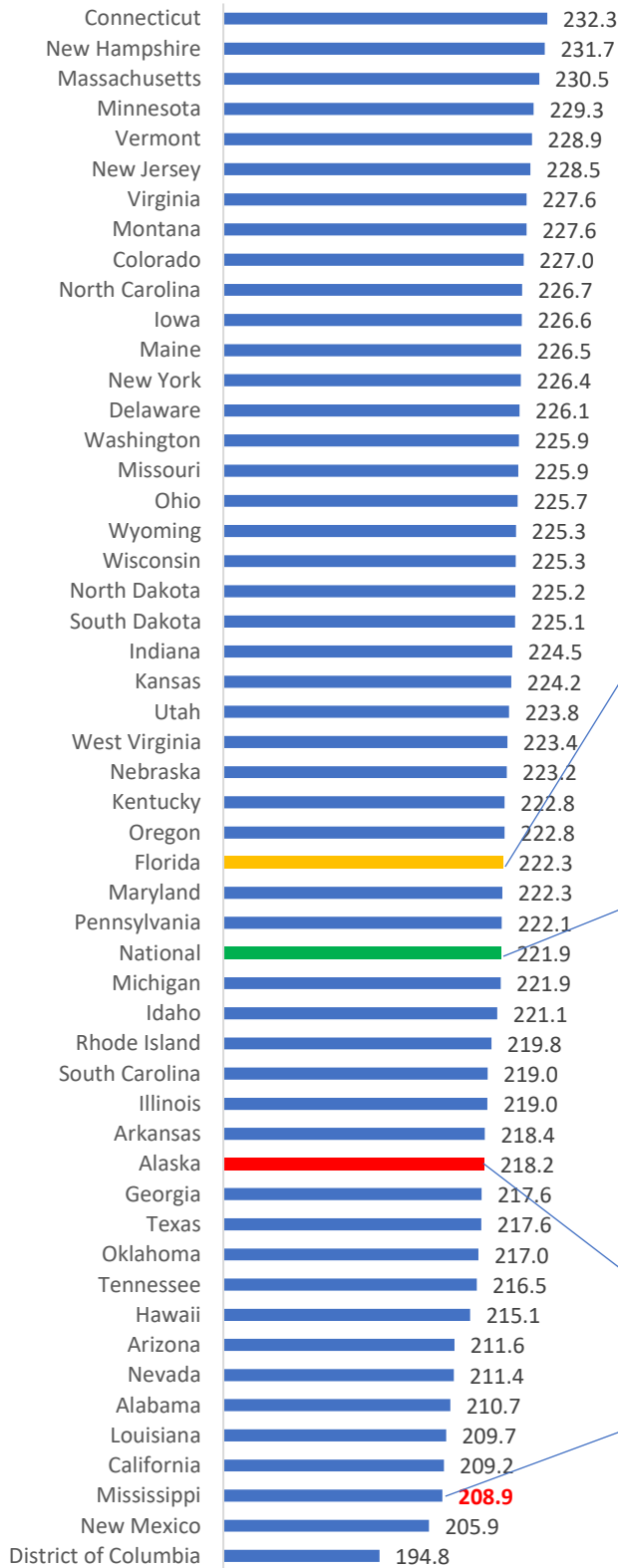
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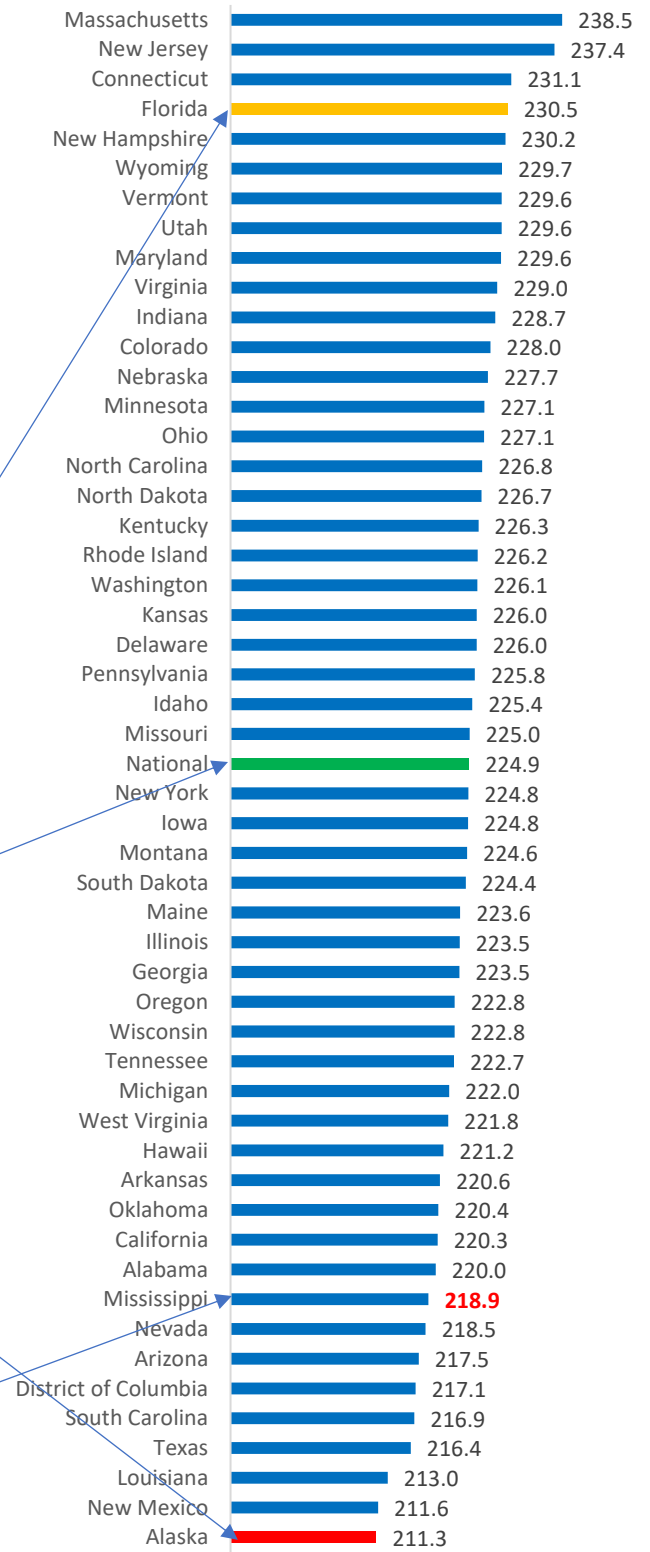
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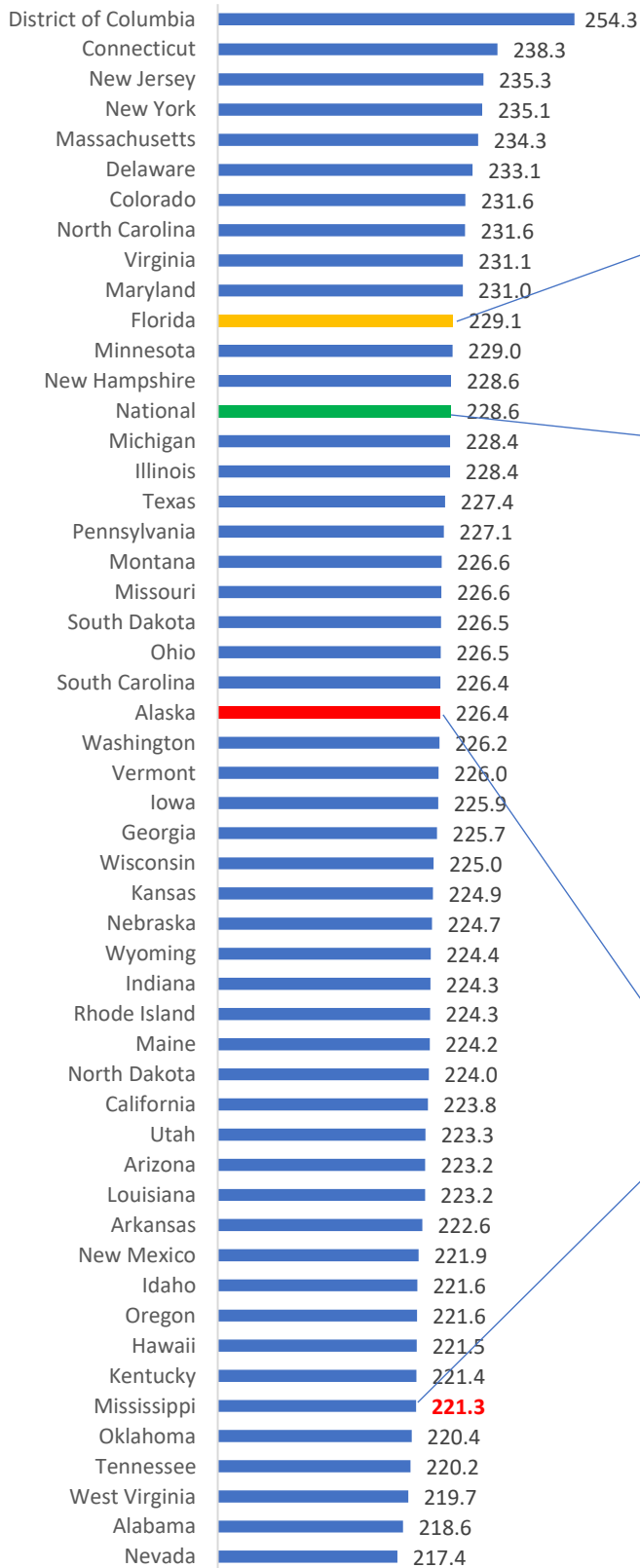
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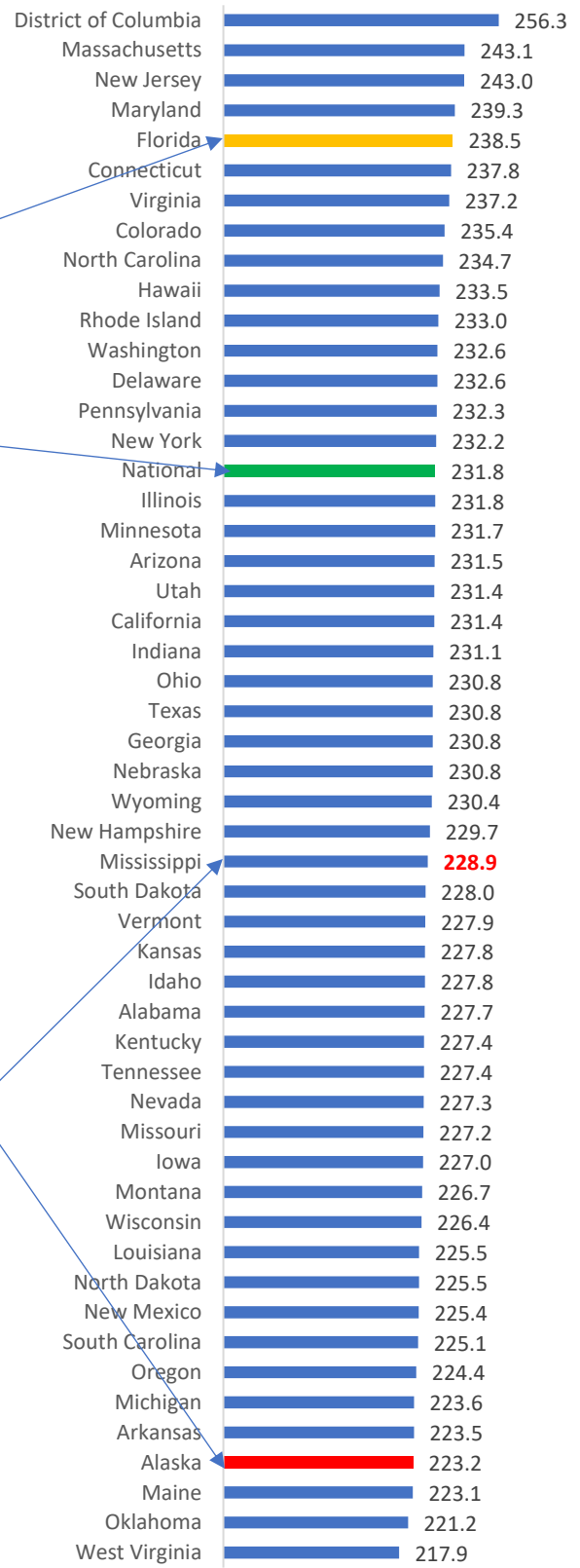
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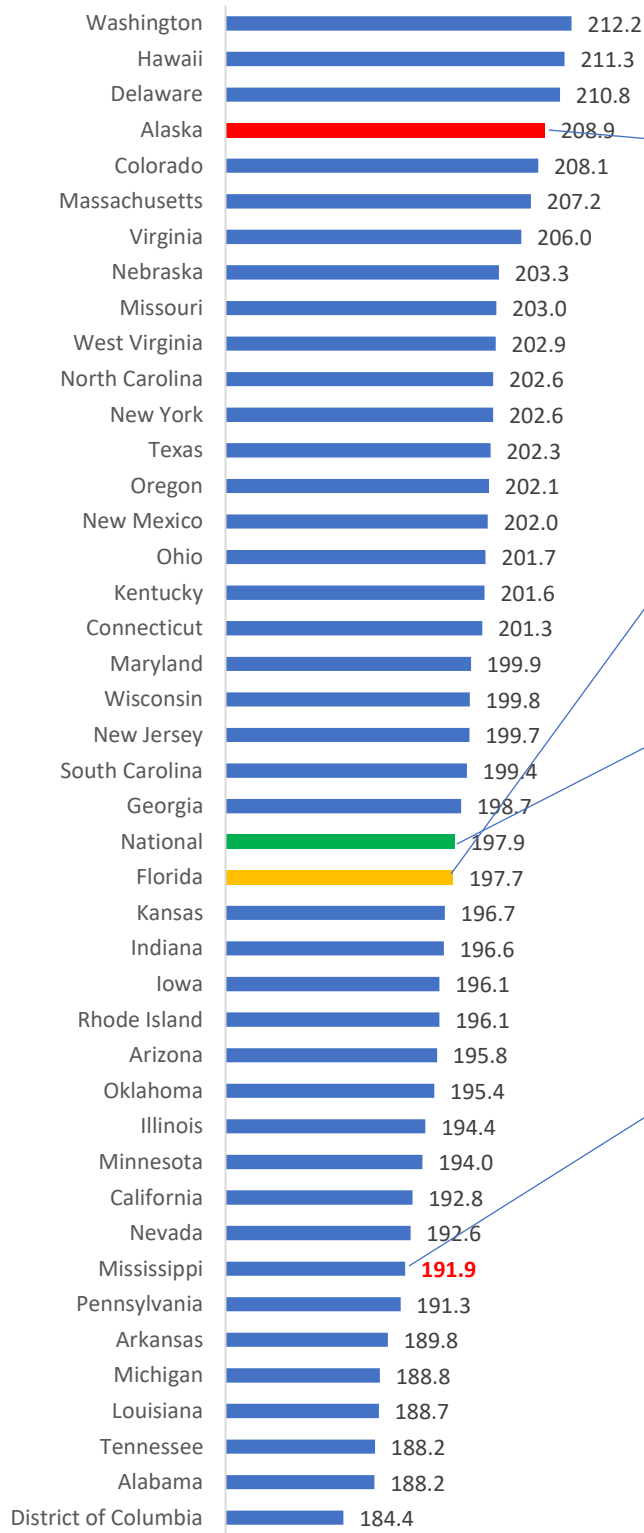
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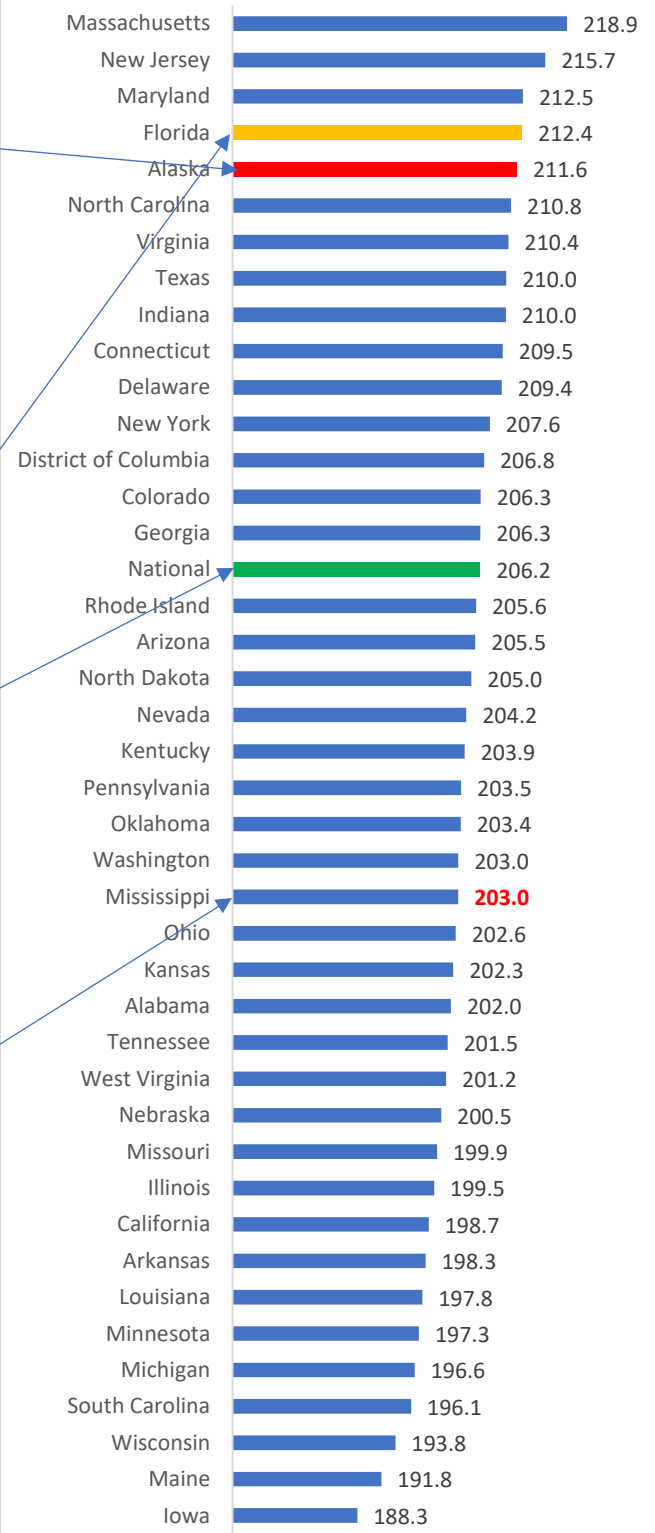
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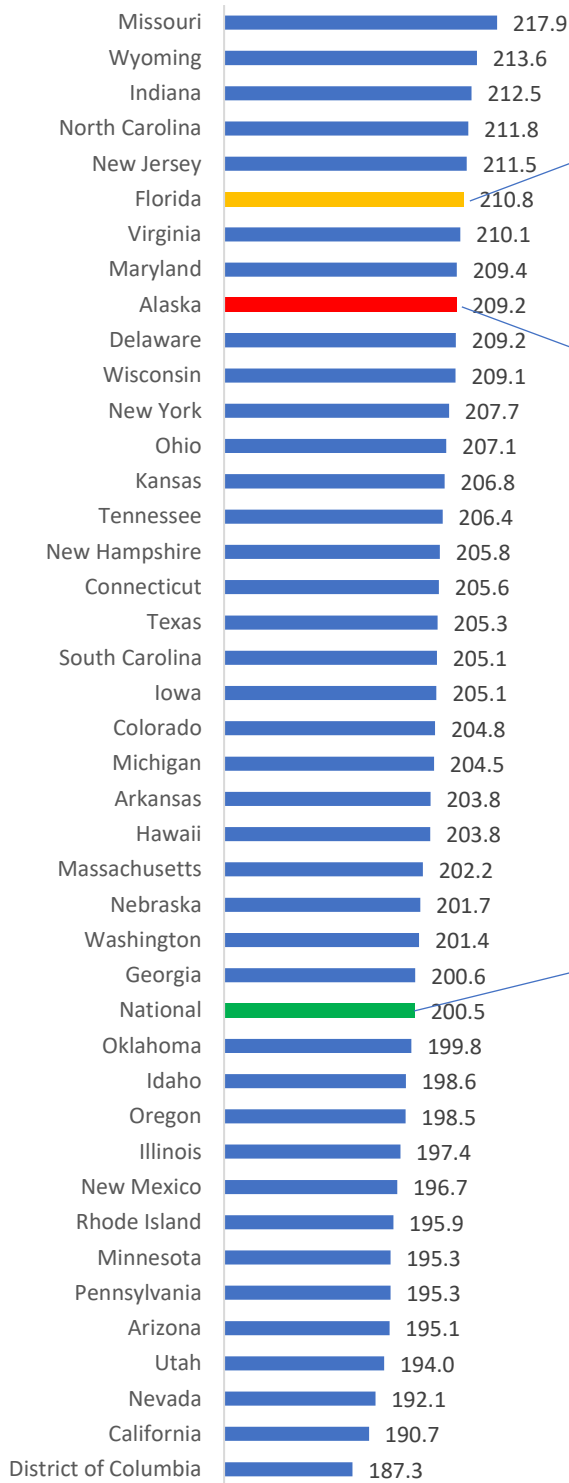
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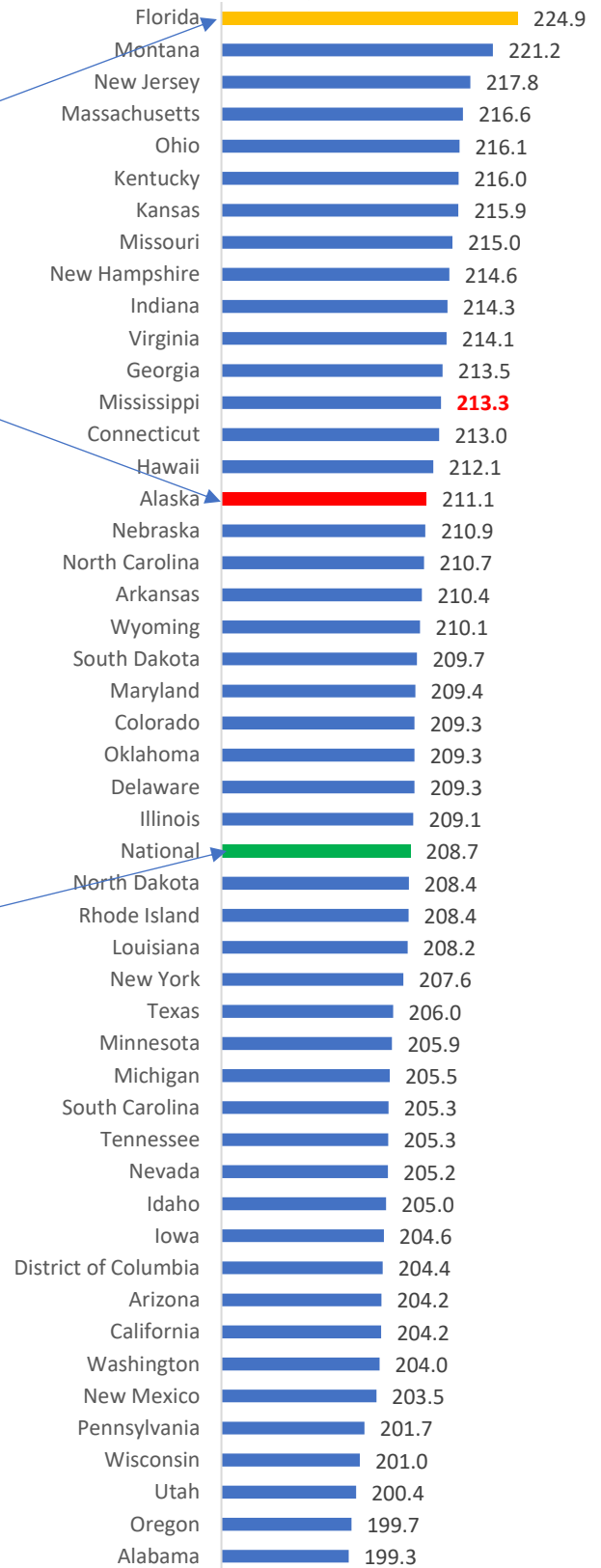
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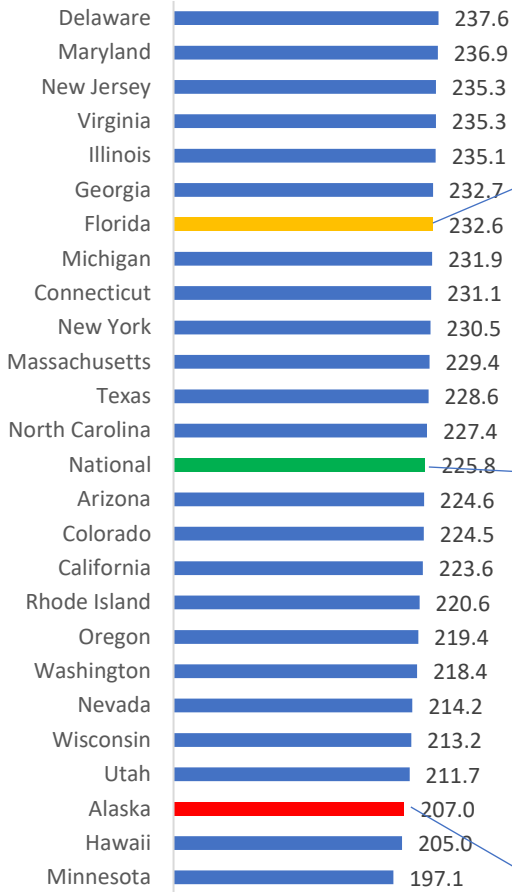
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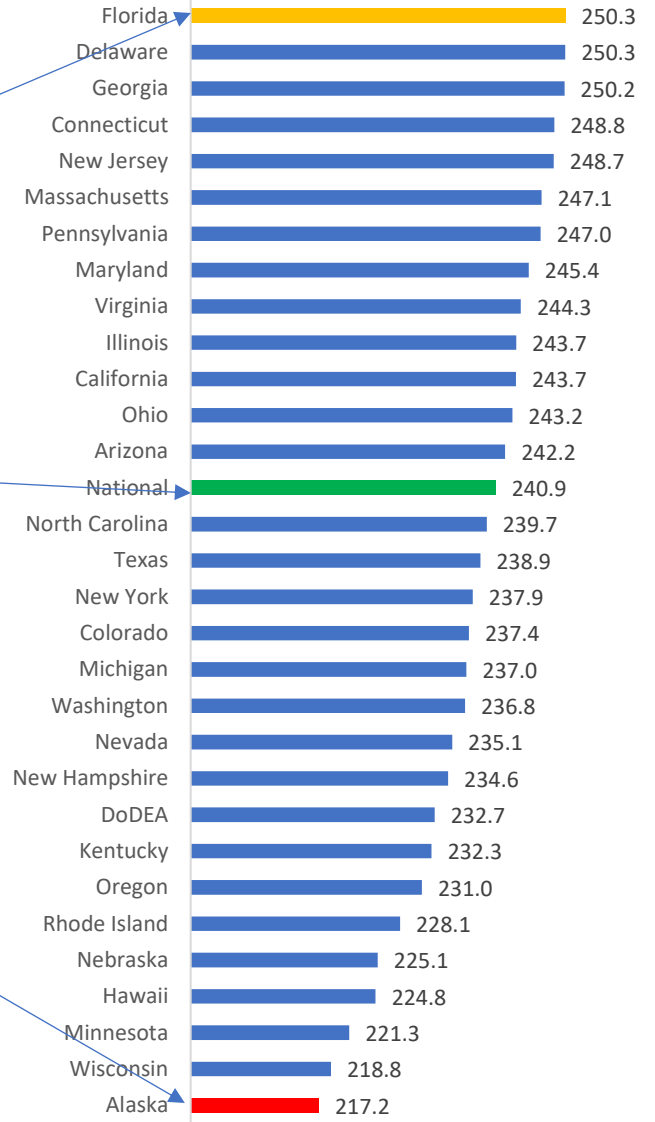
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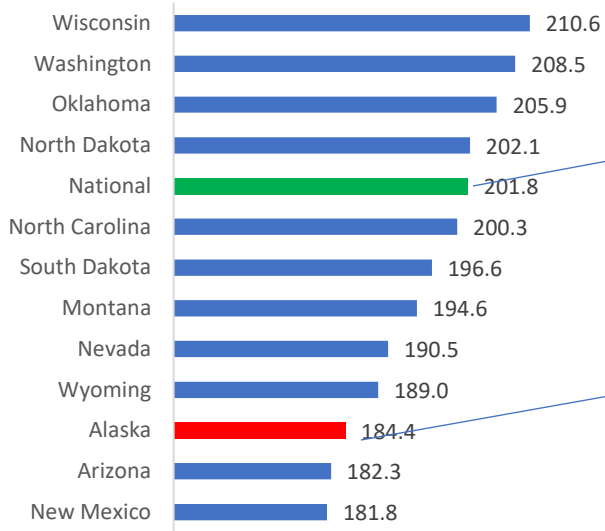
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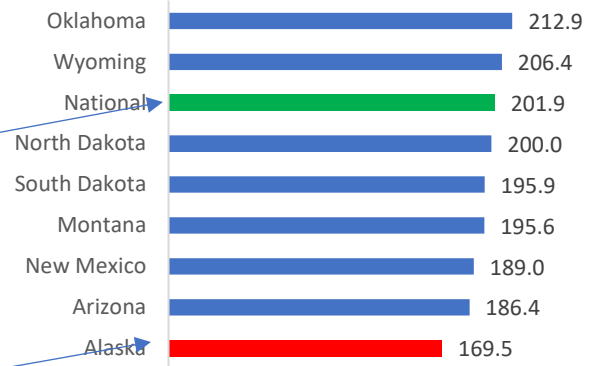
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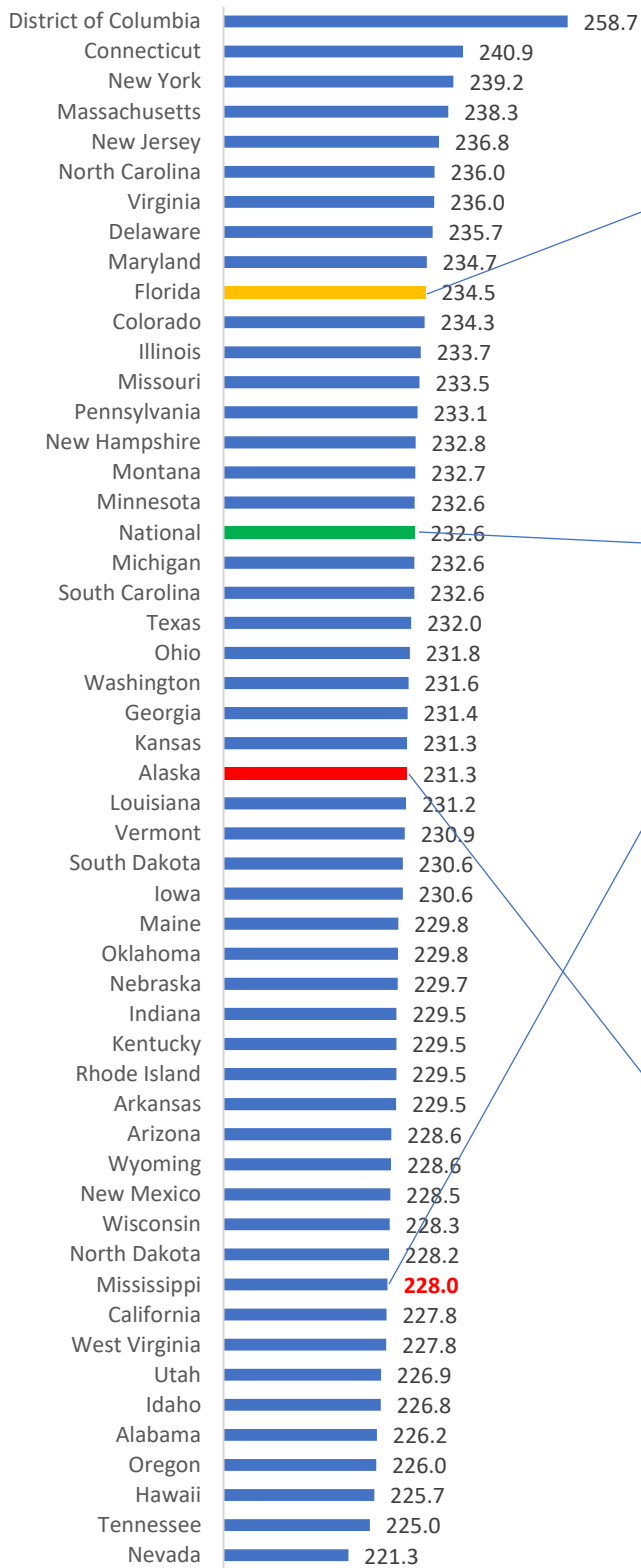
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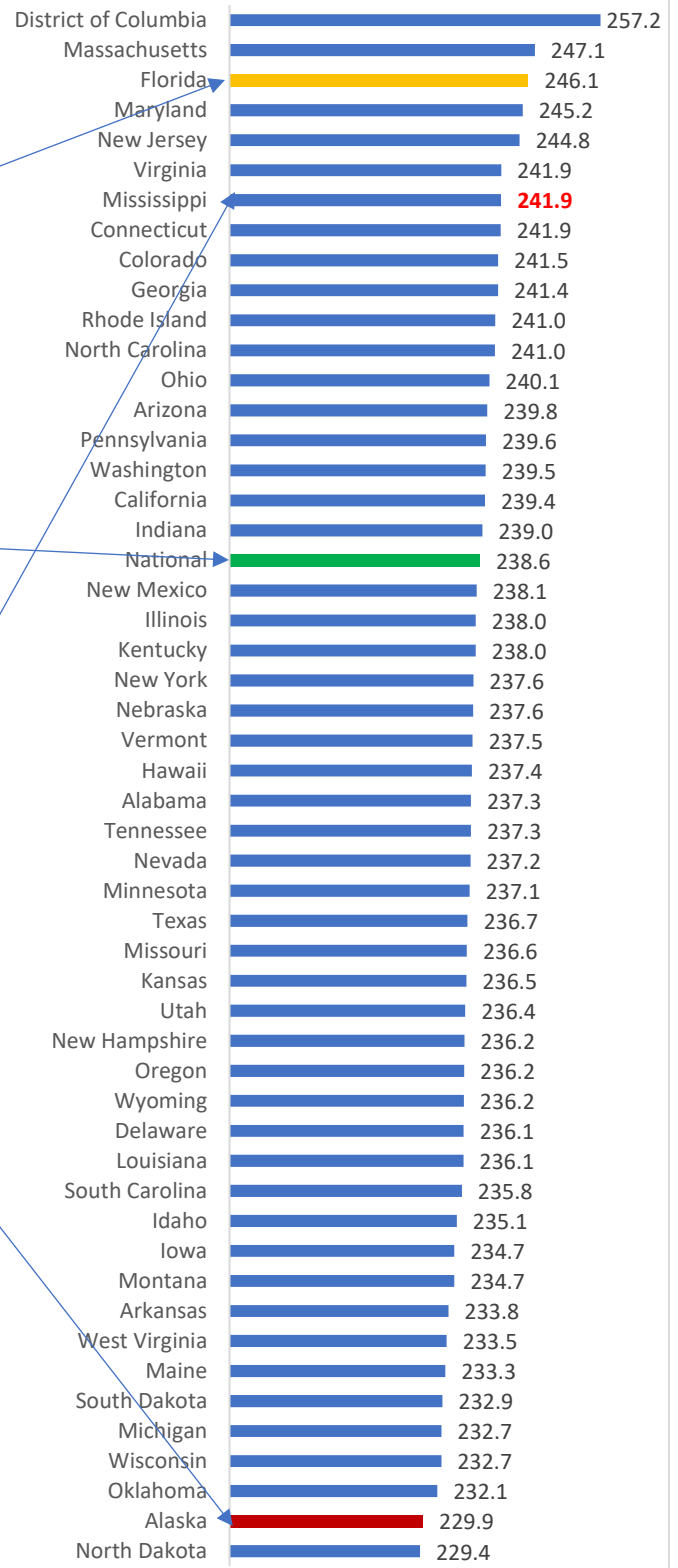
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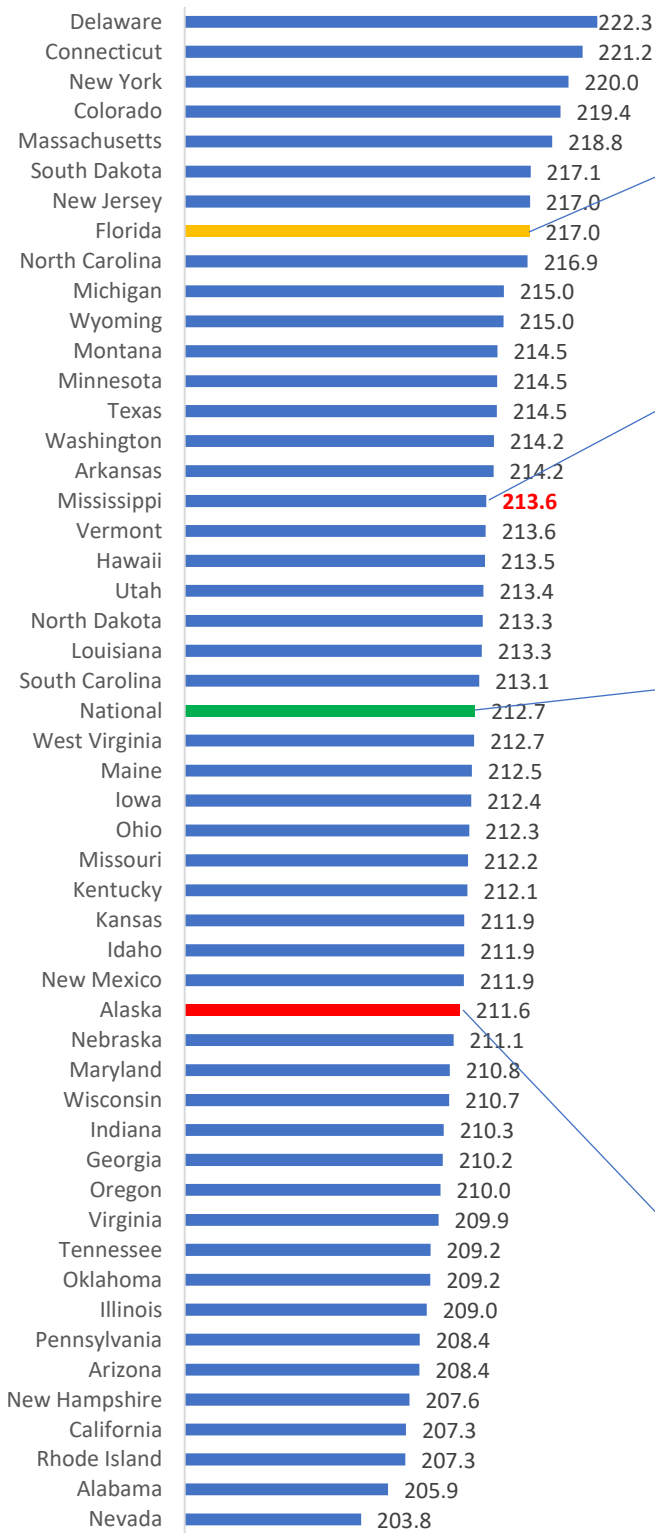
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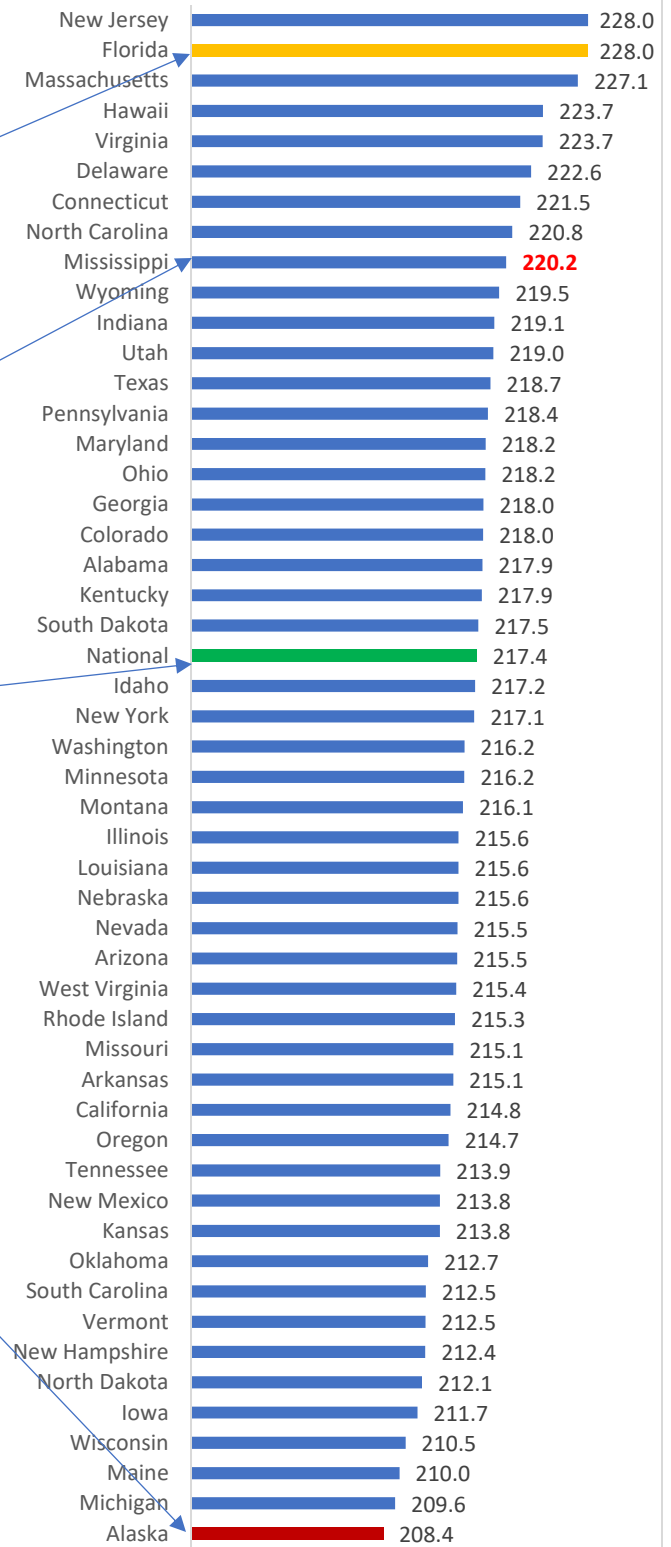
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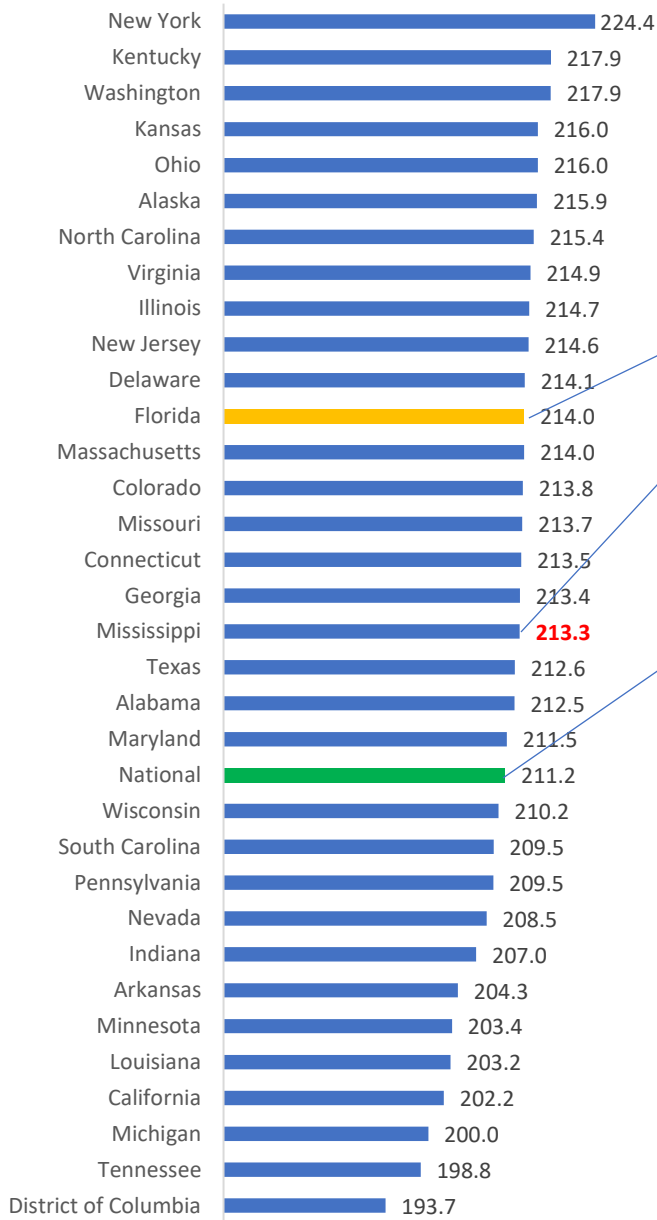
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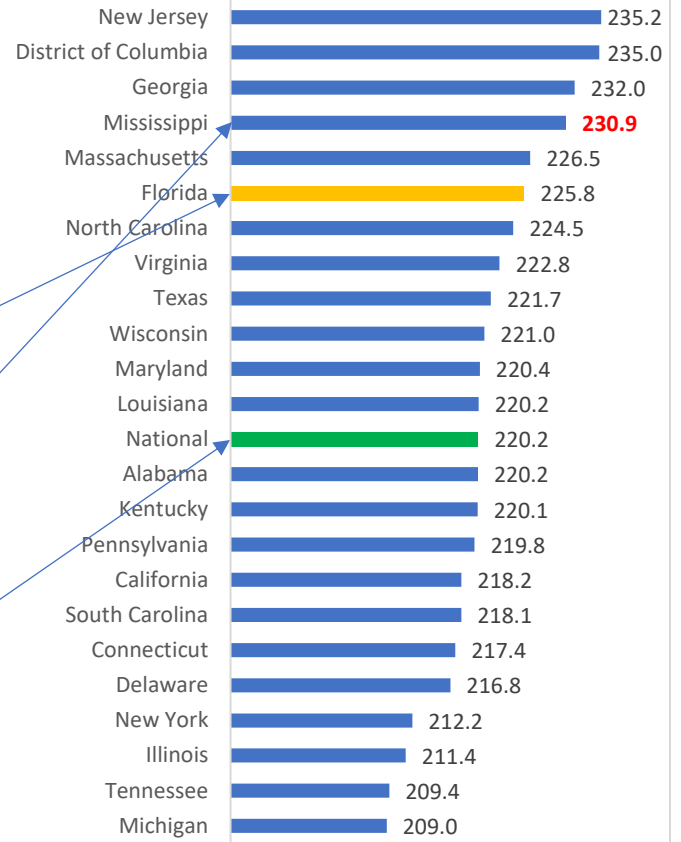
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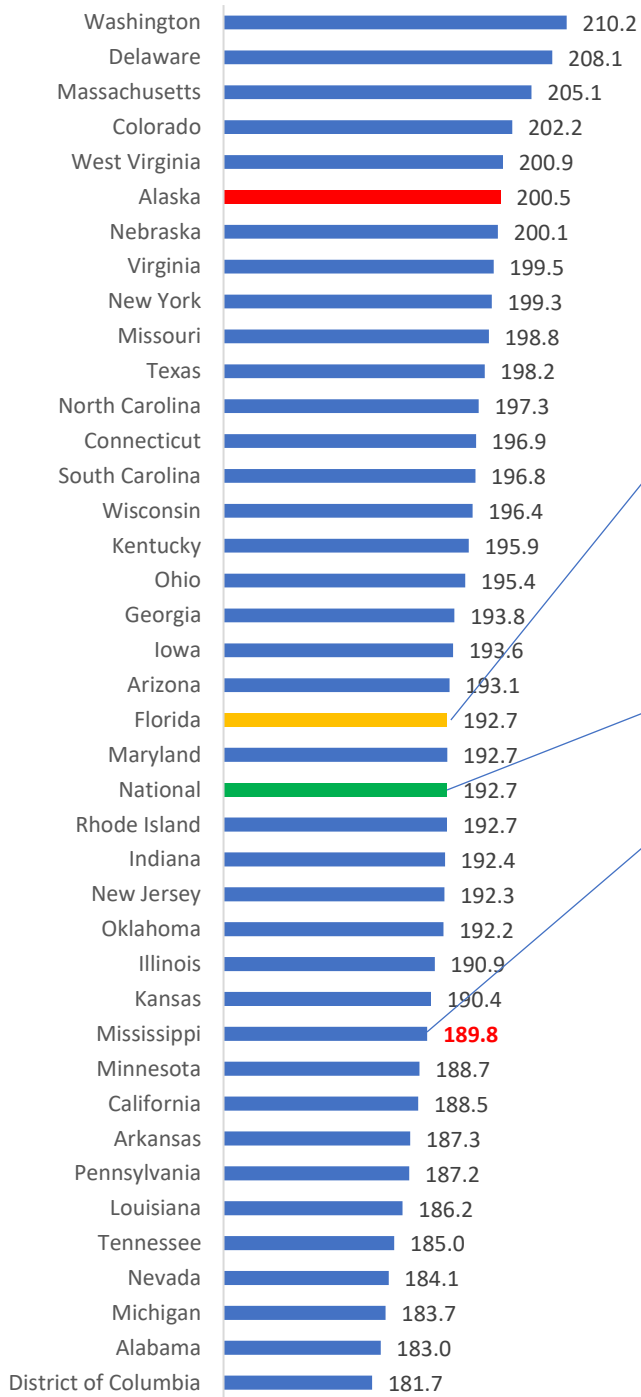
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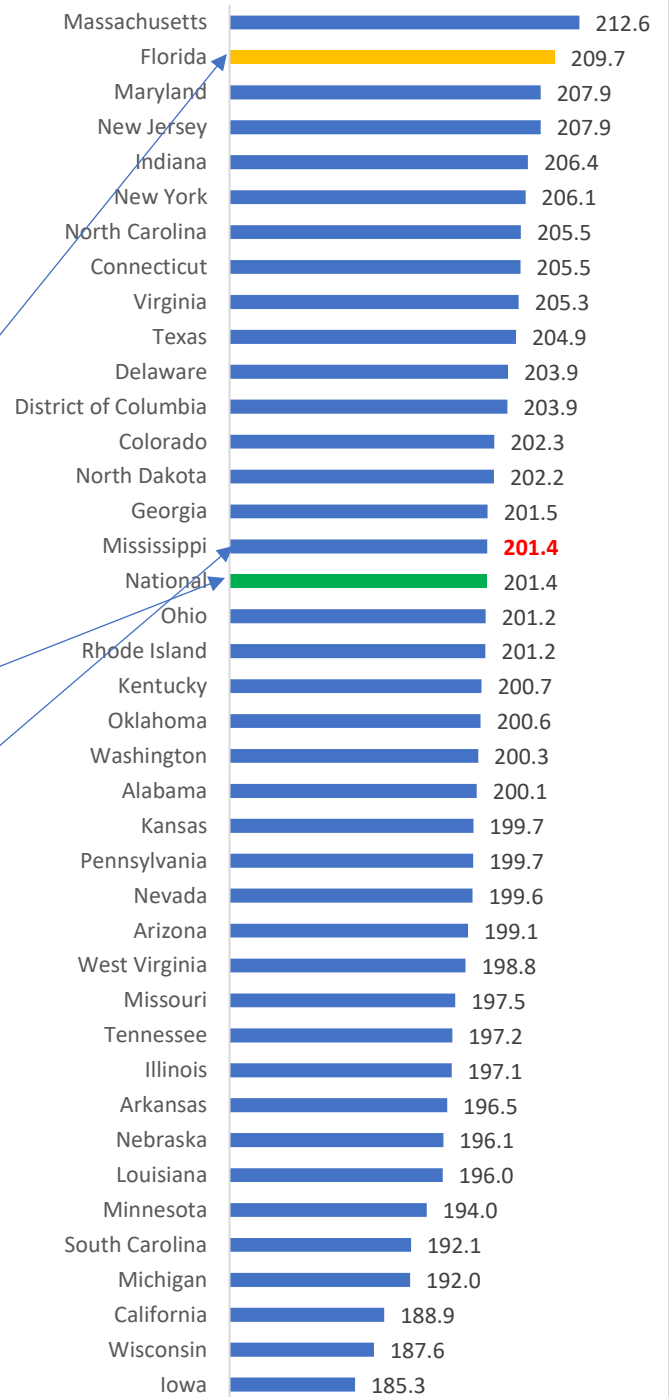
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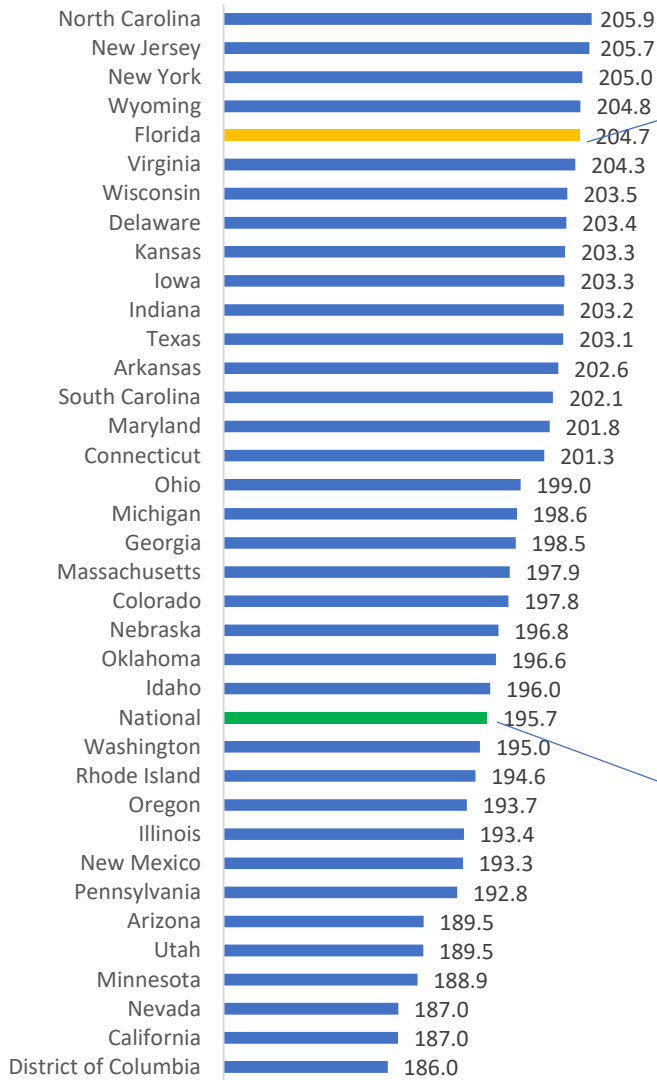
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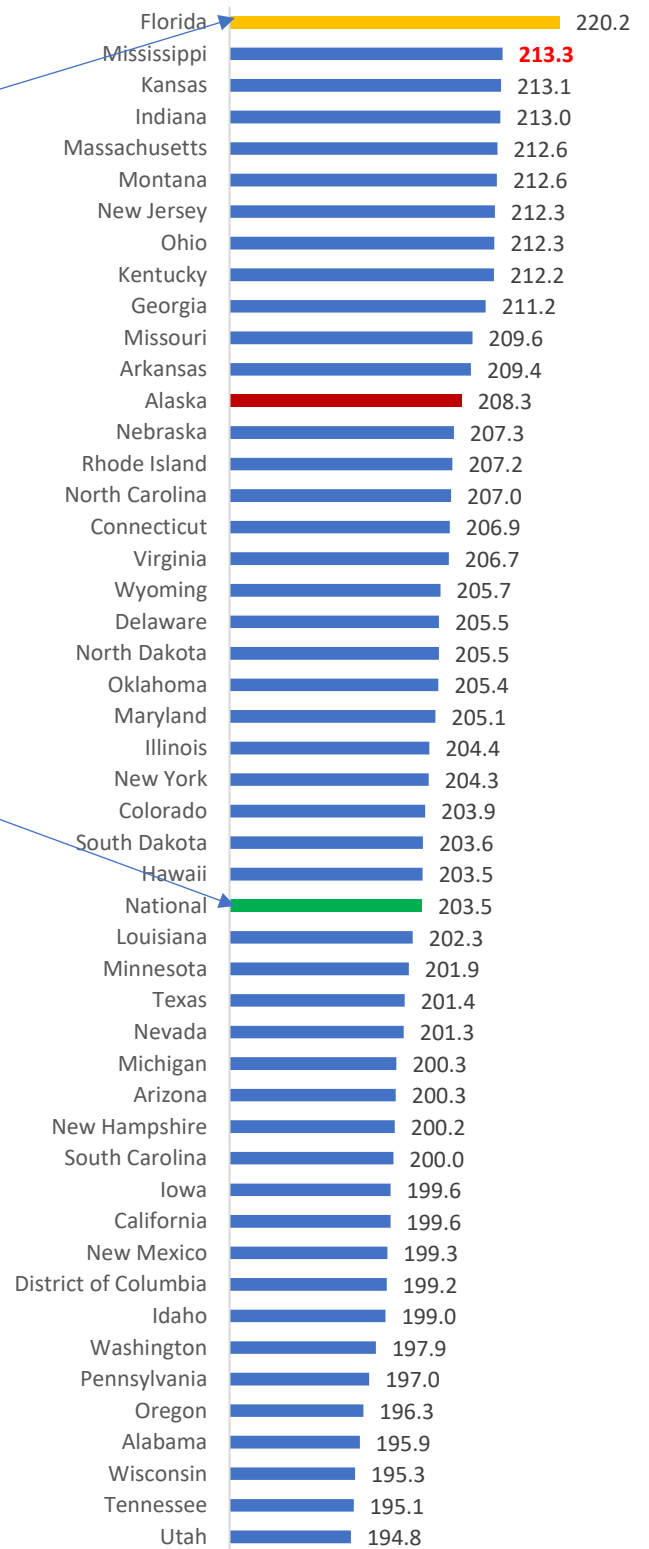
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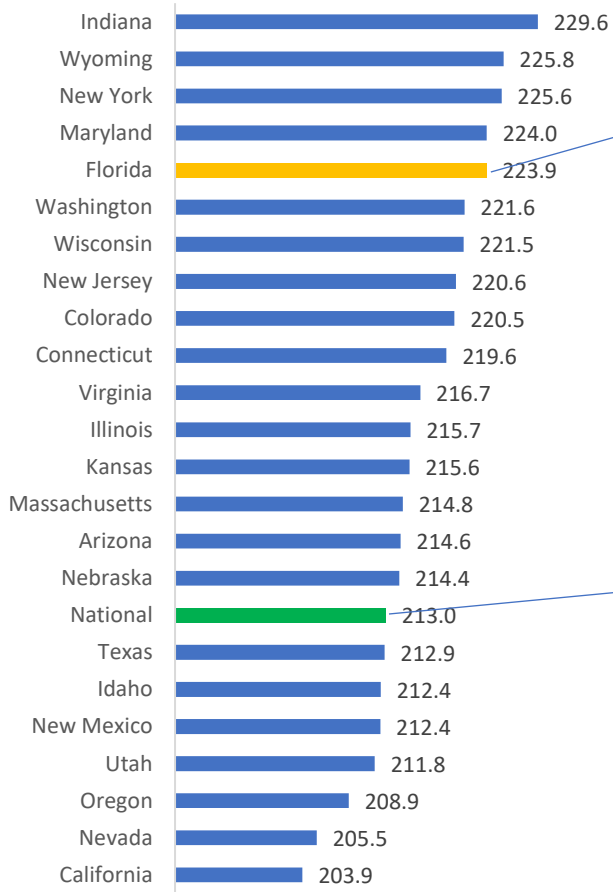
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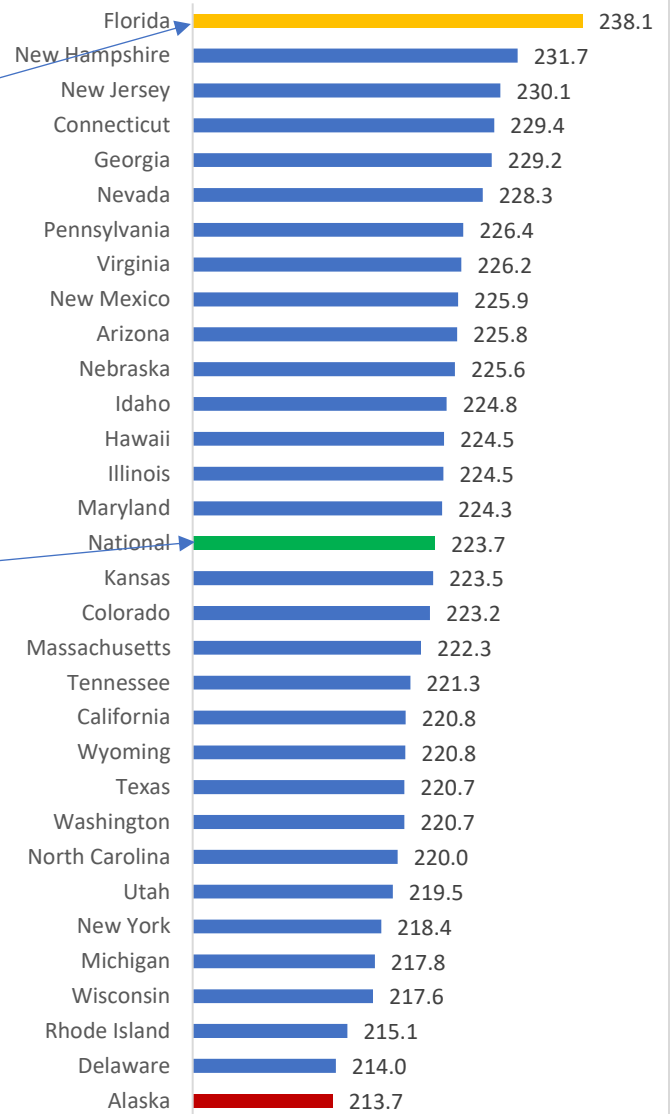
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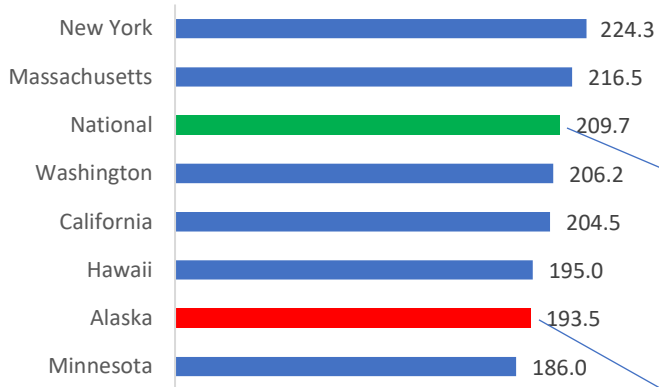
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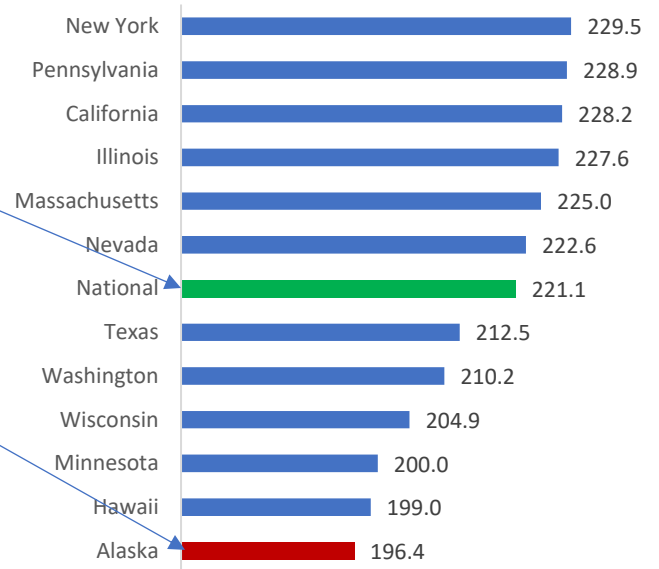
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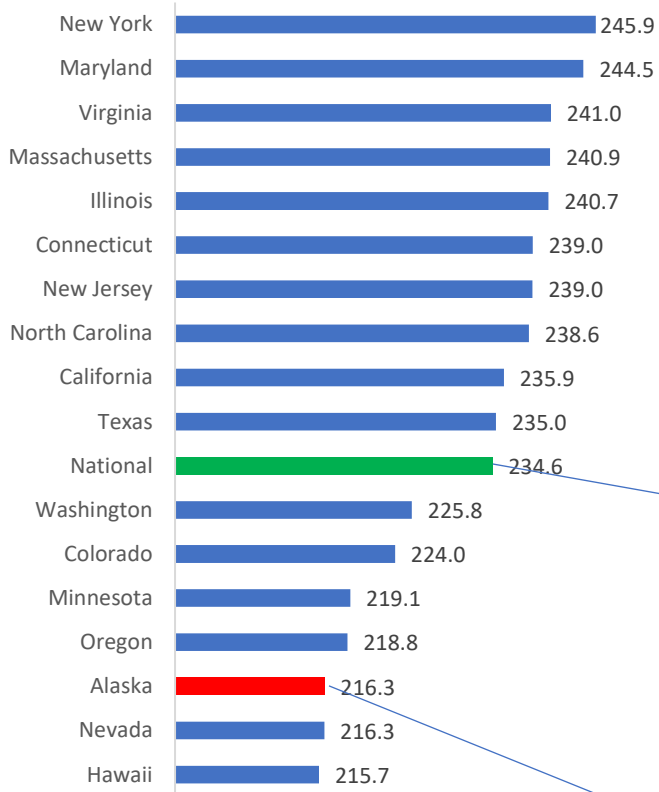
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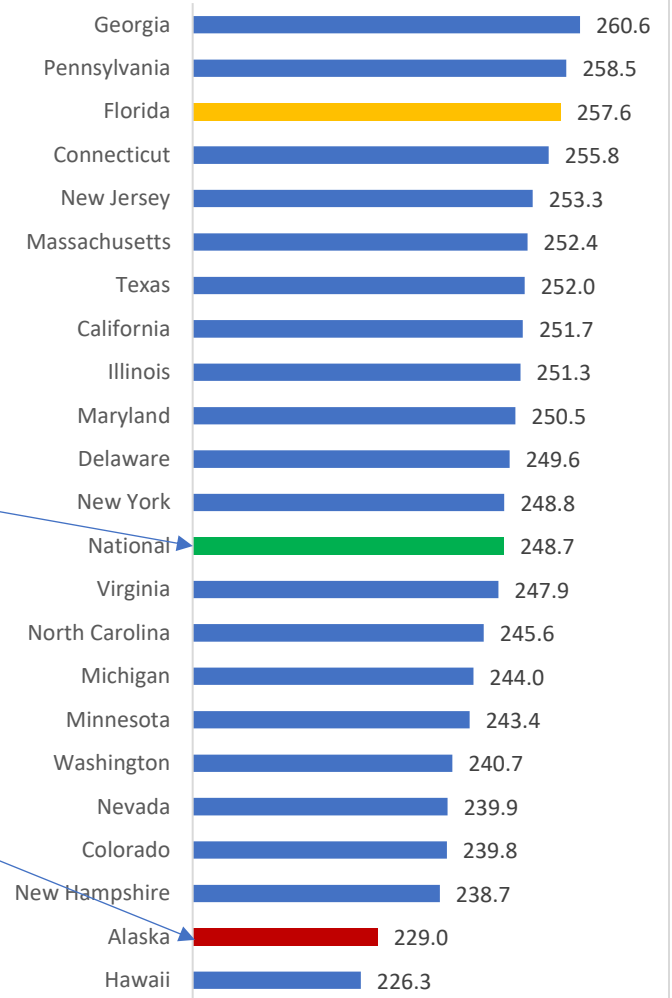
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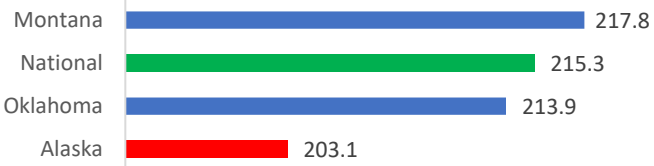
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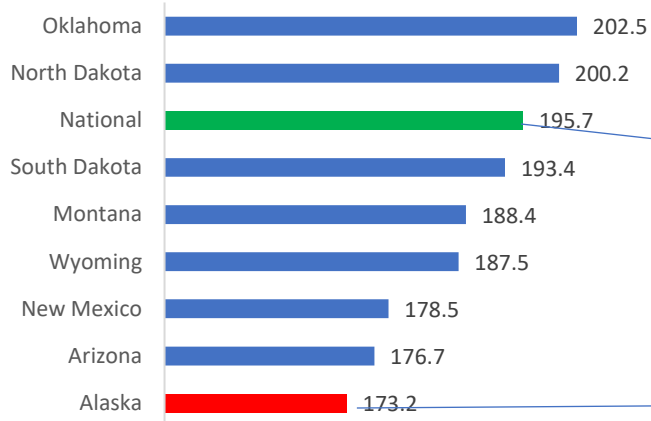
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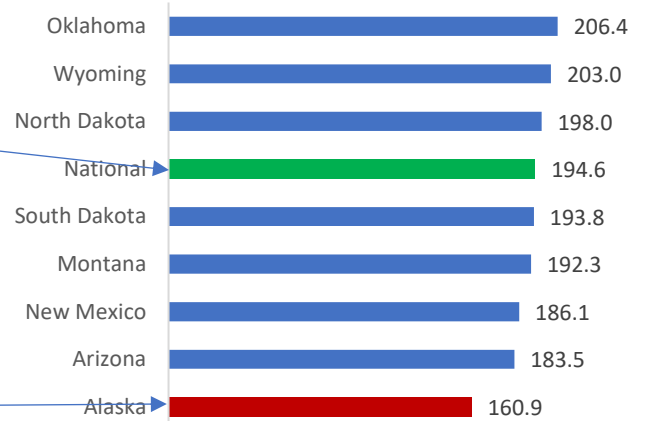
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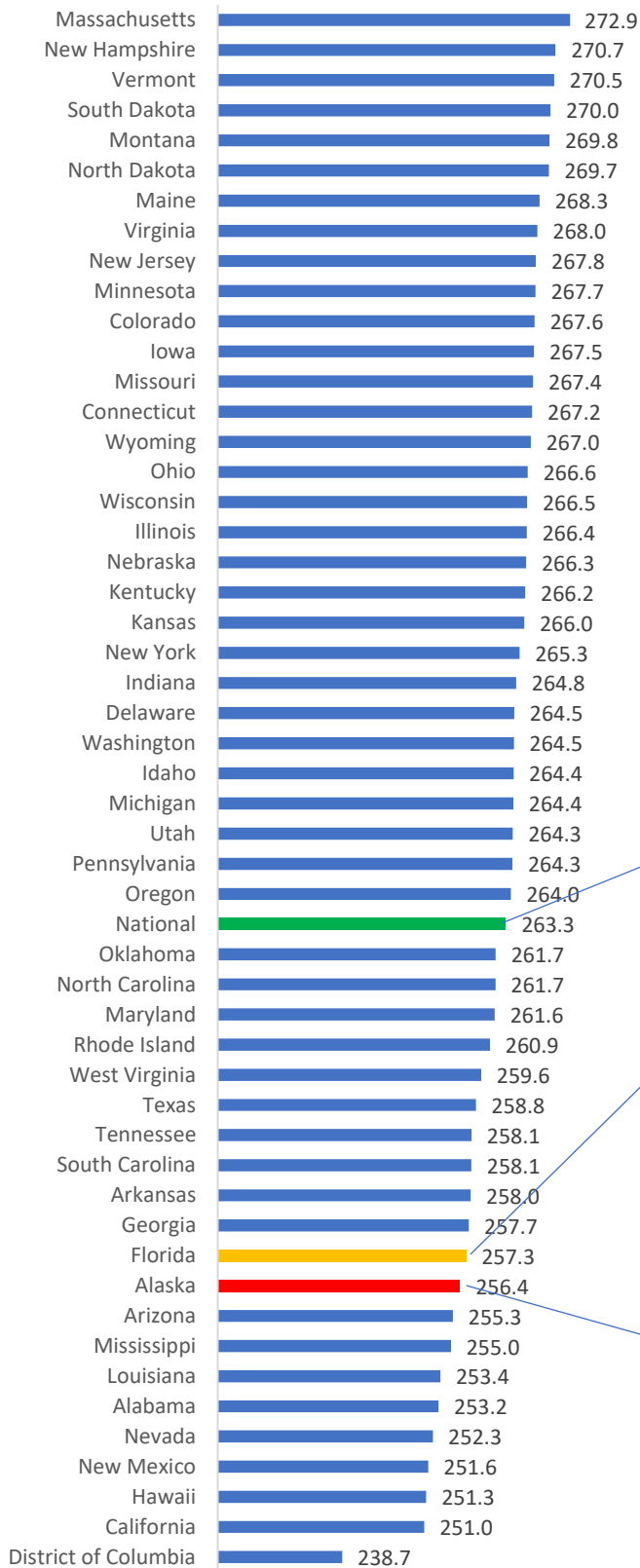
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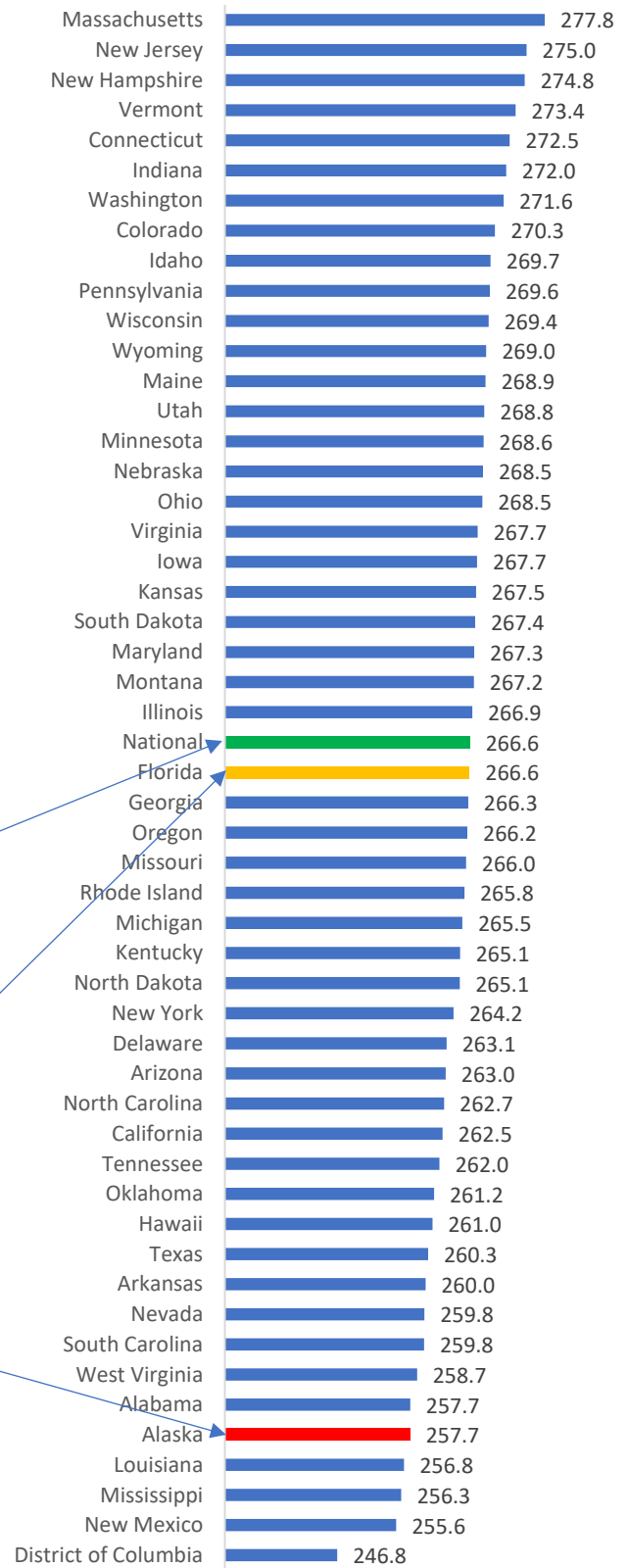
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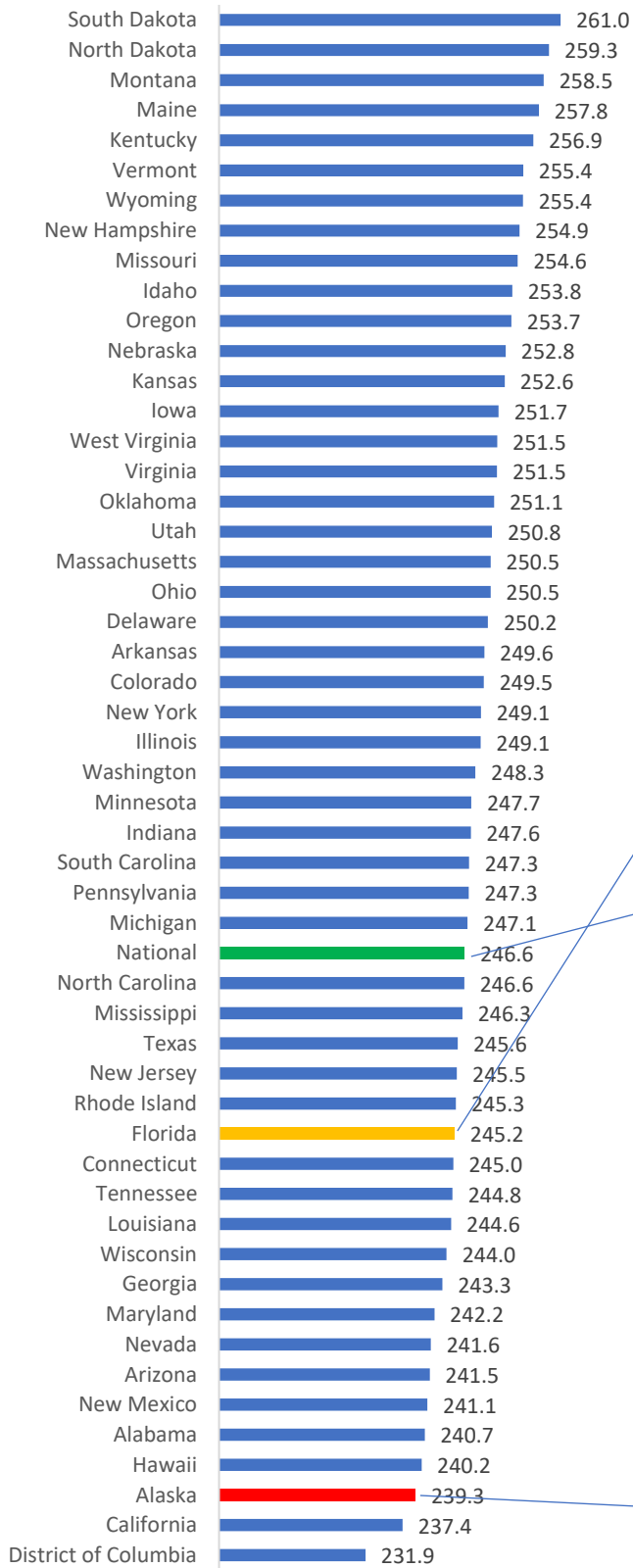
2003 NAEP 8th Grade Reading All Students



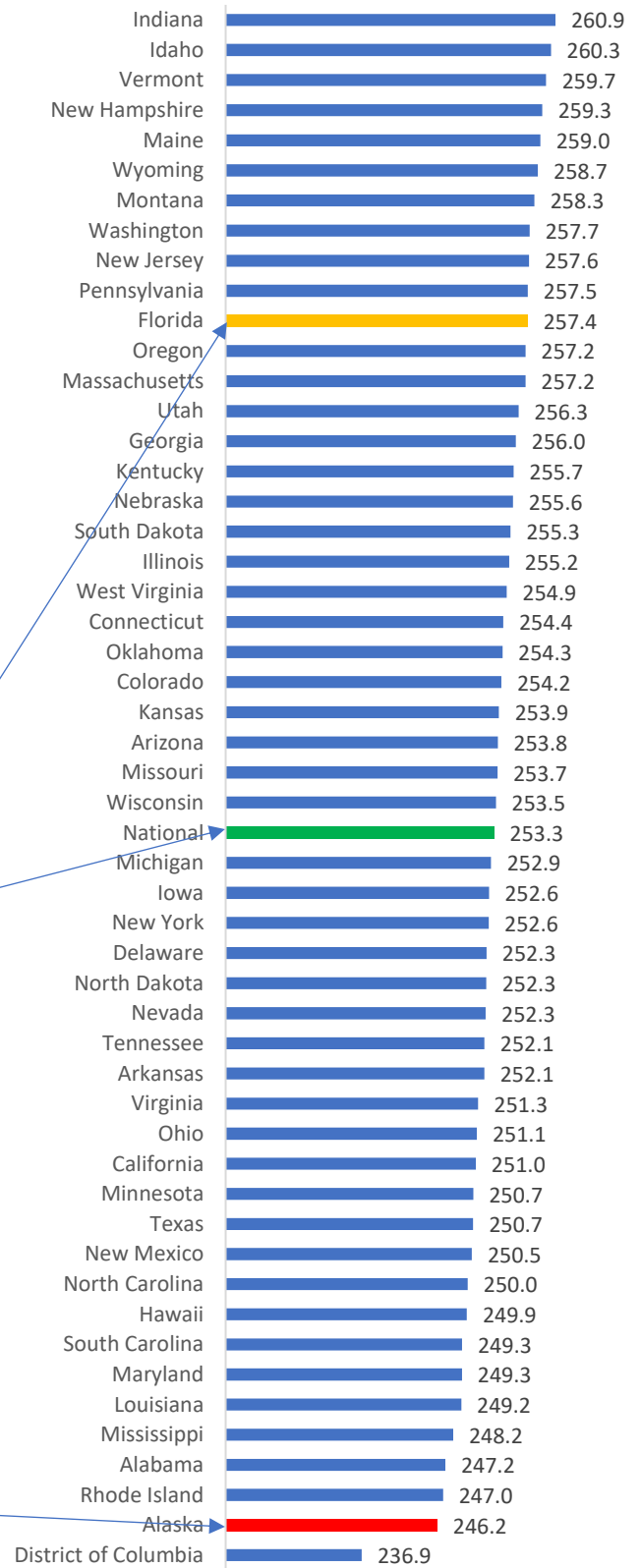
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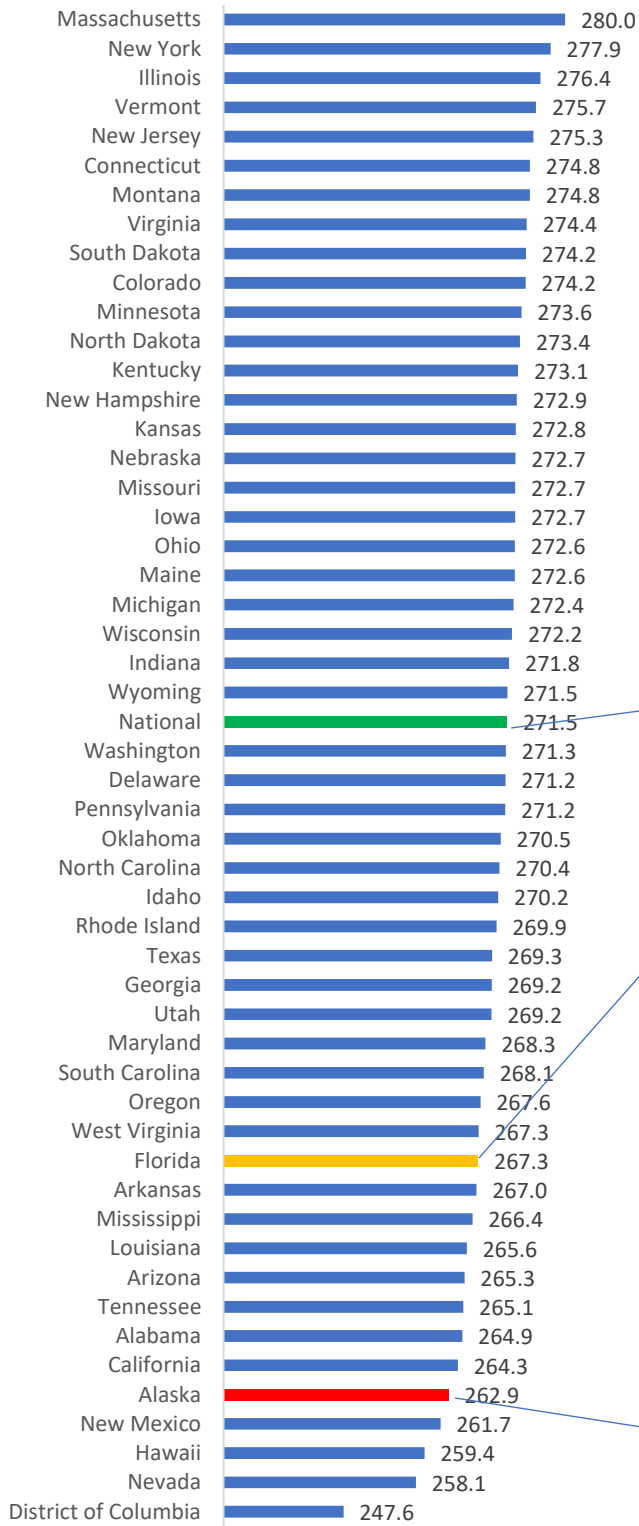
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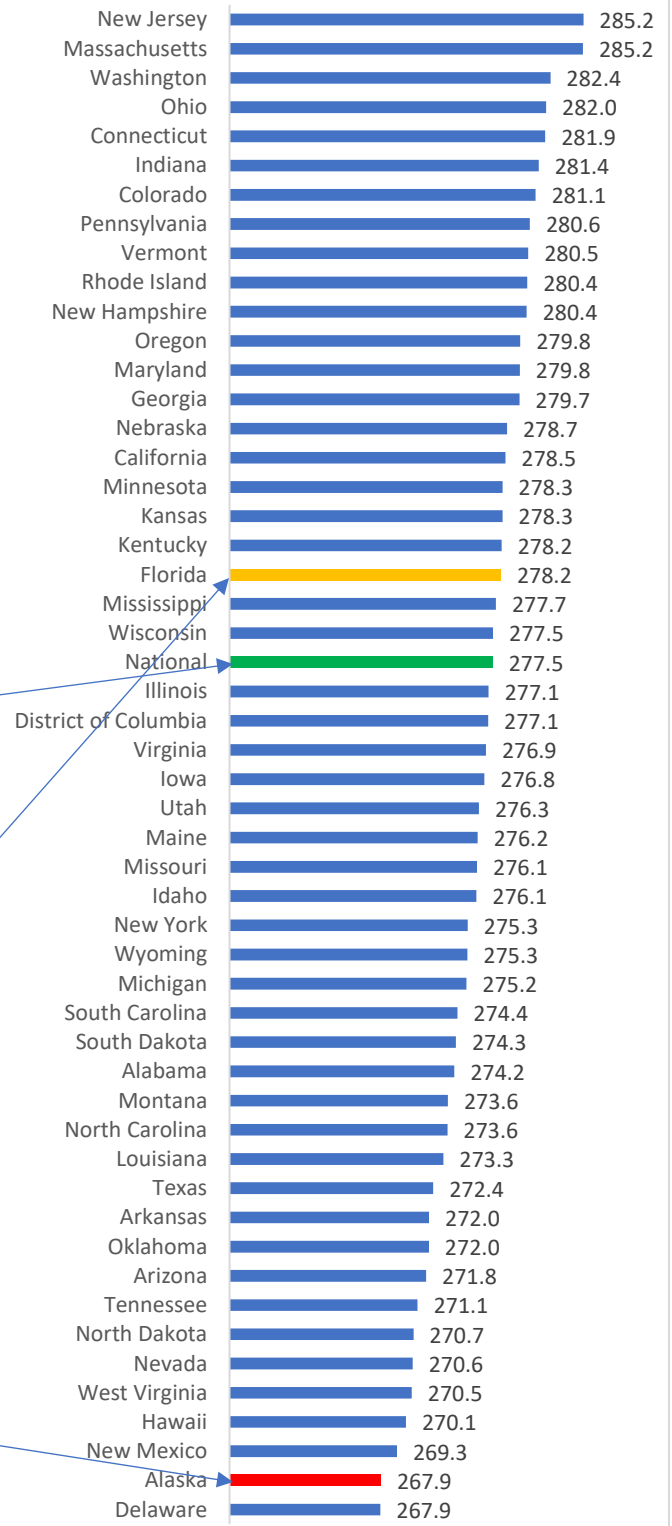
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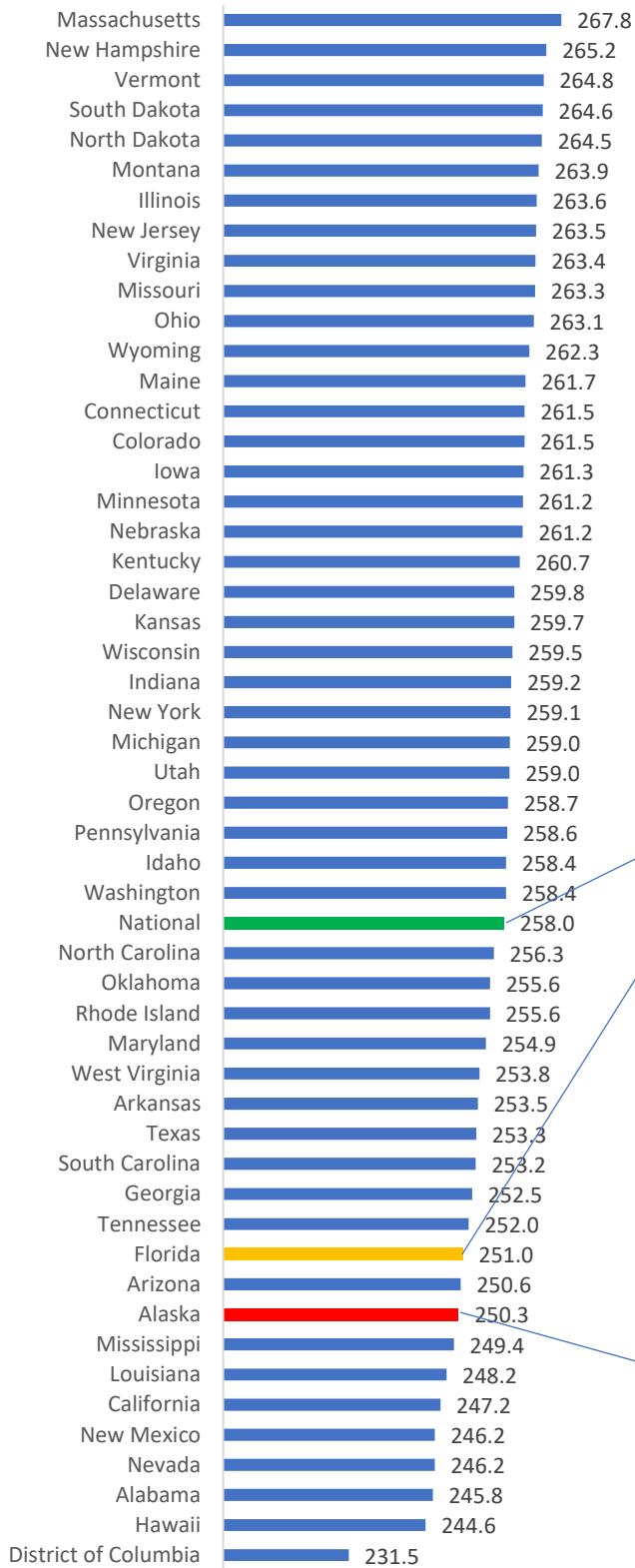
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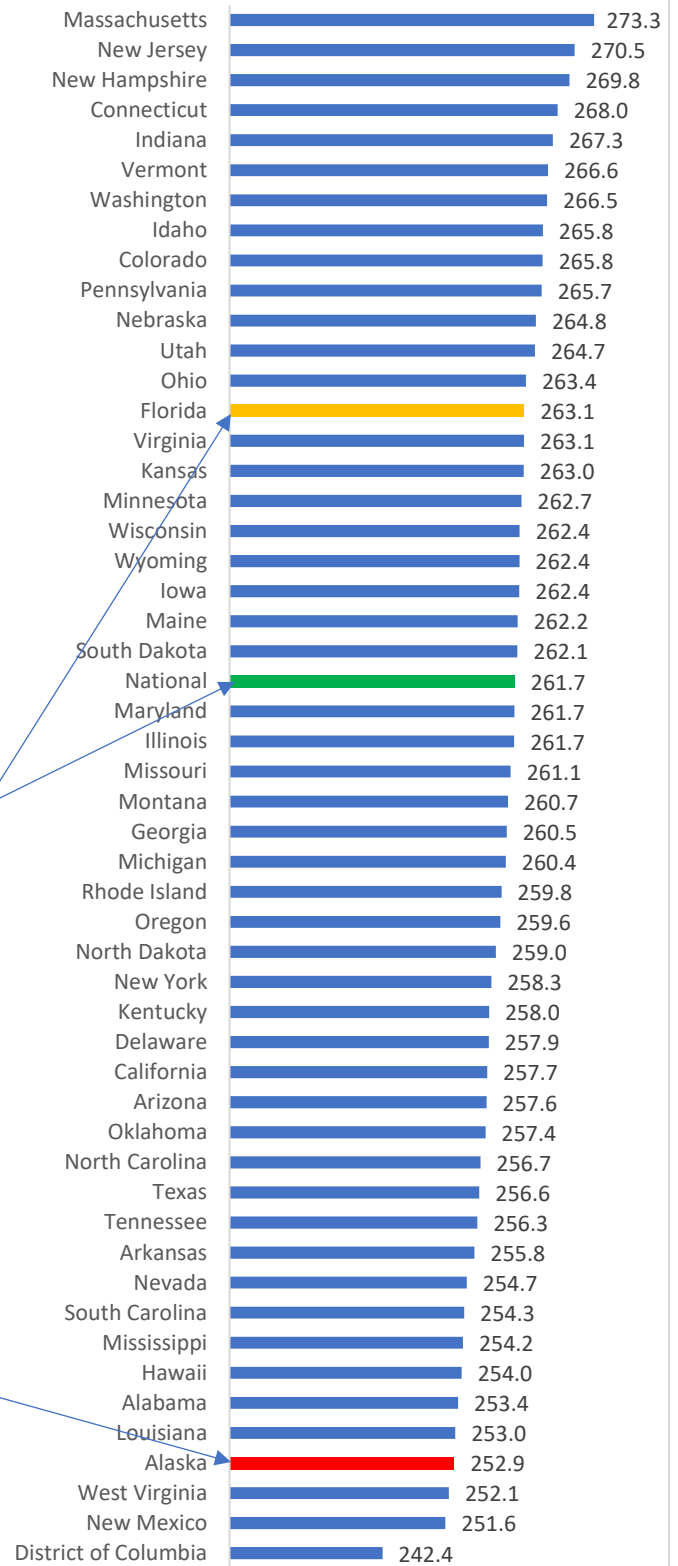
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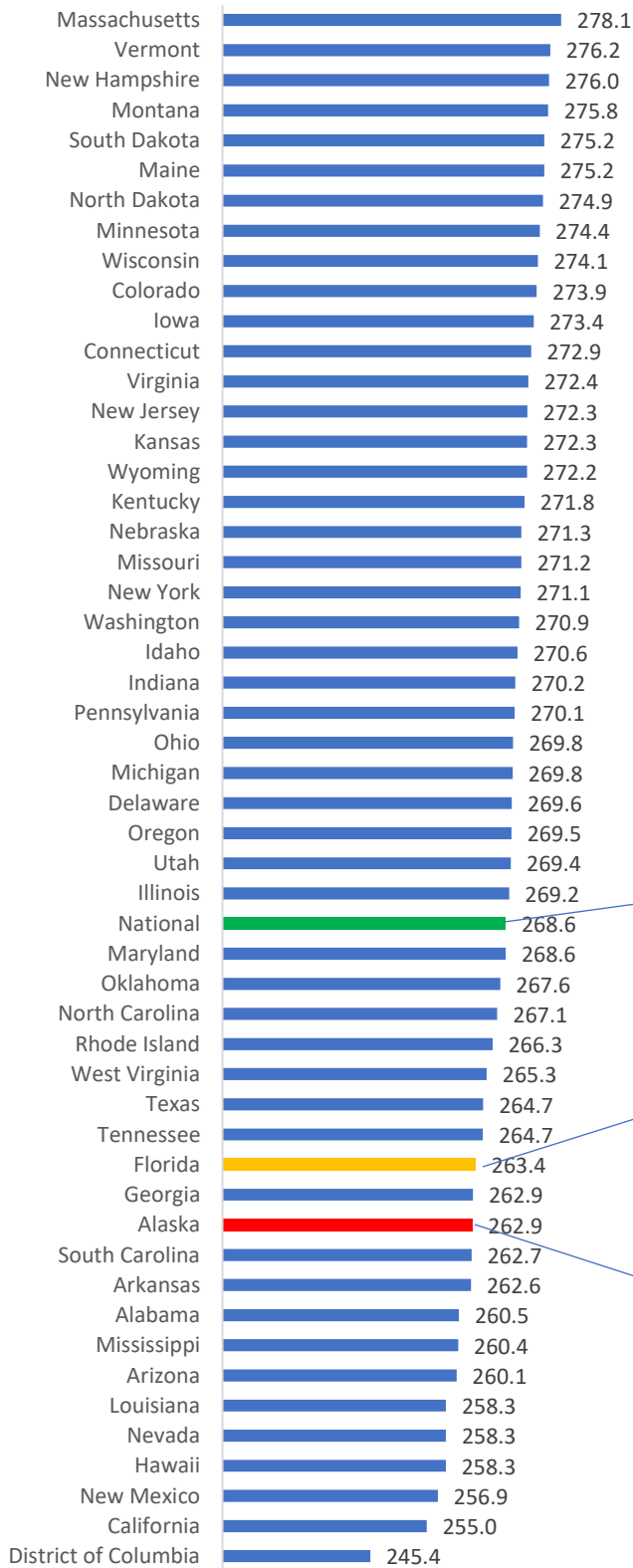
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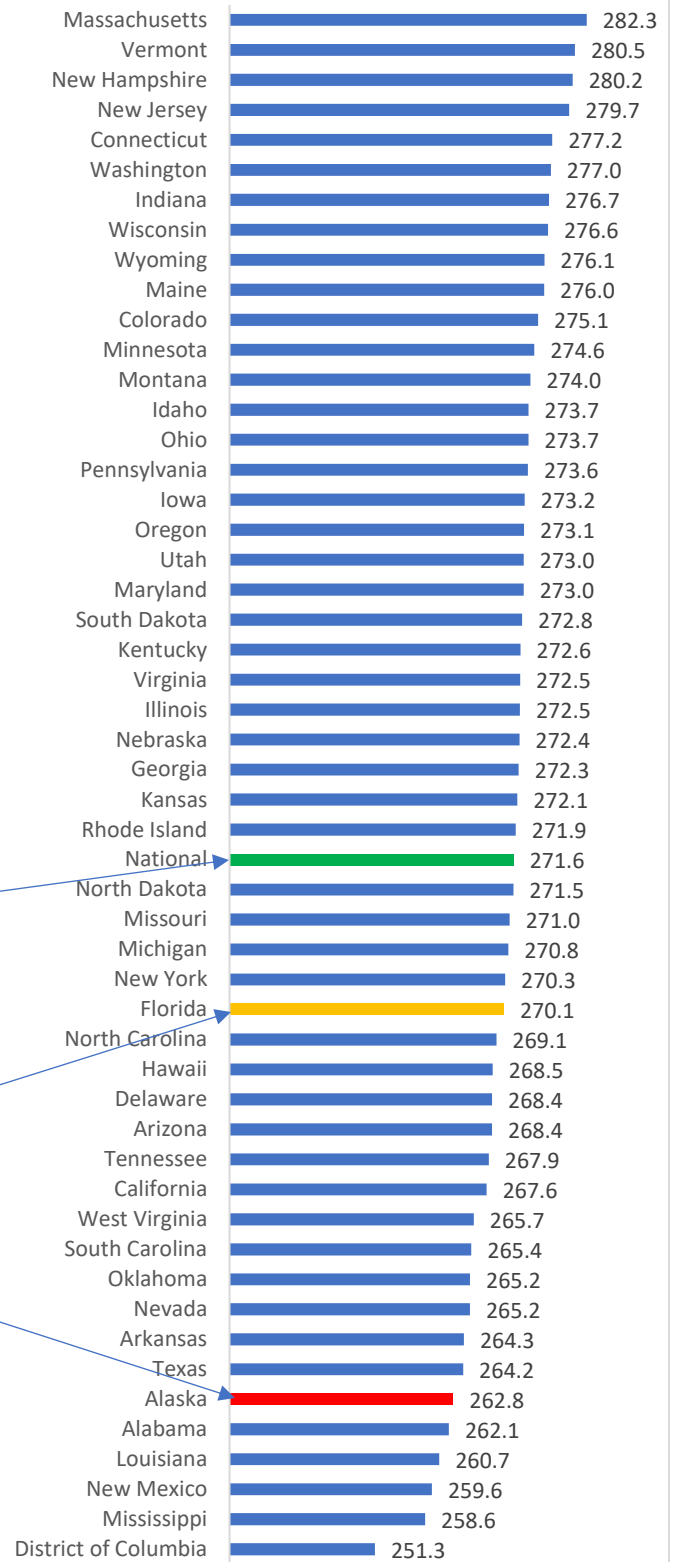
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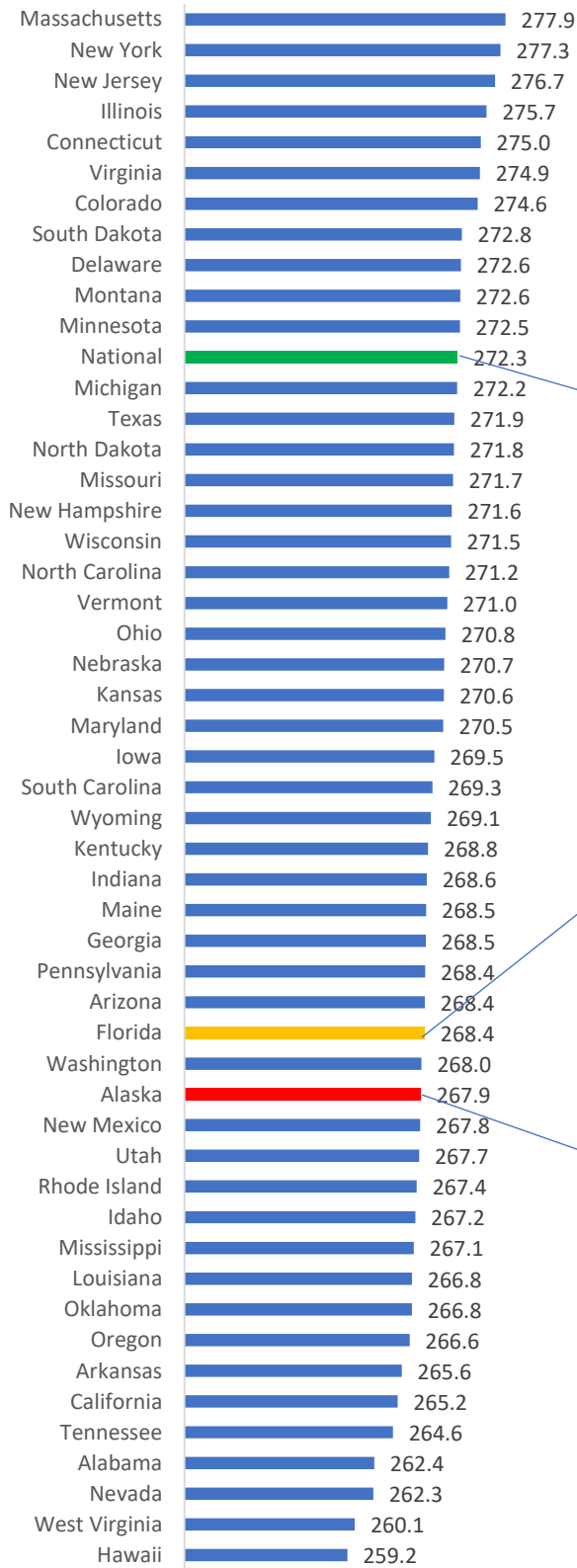
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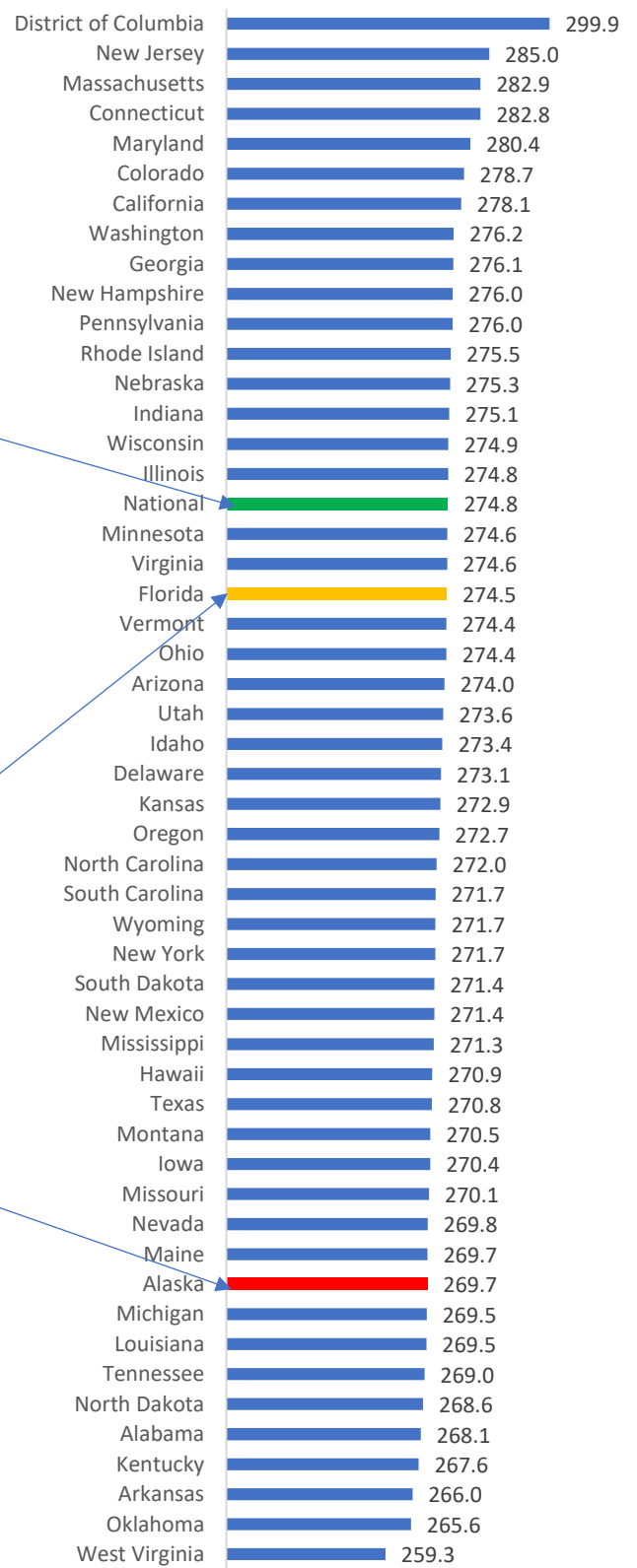
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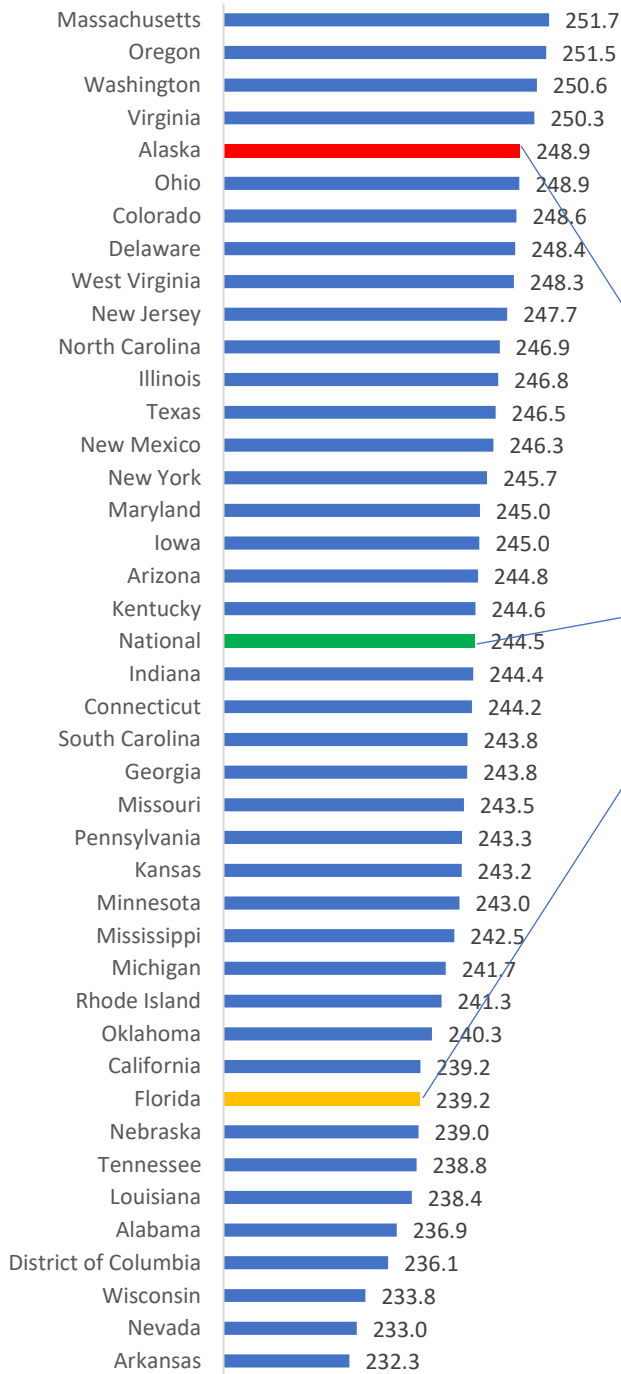
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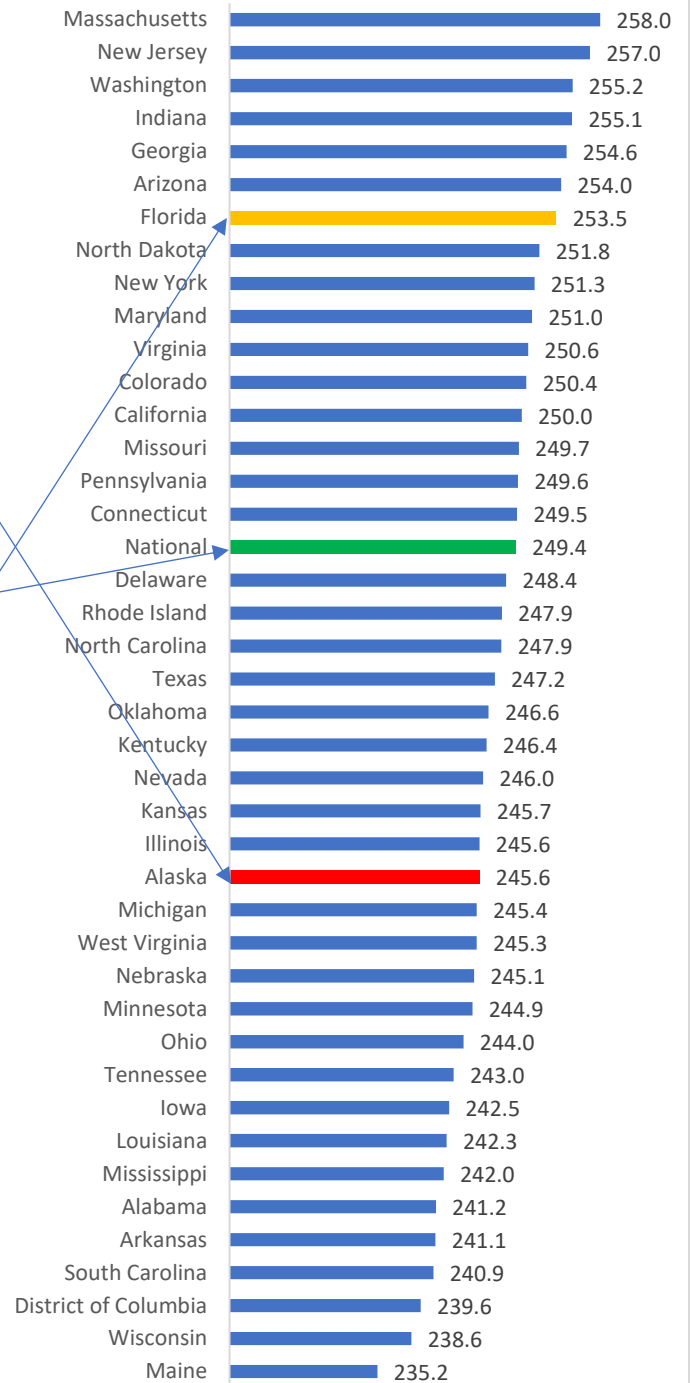
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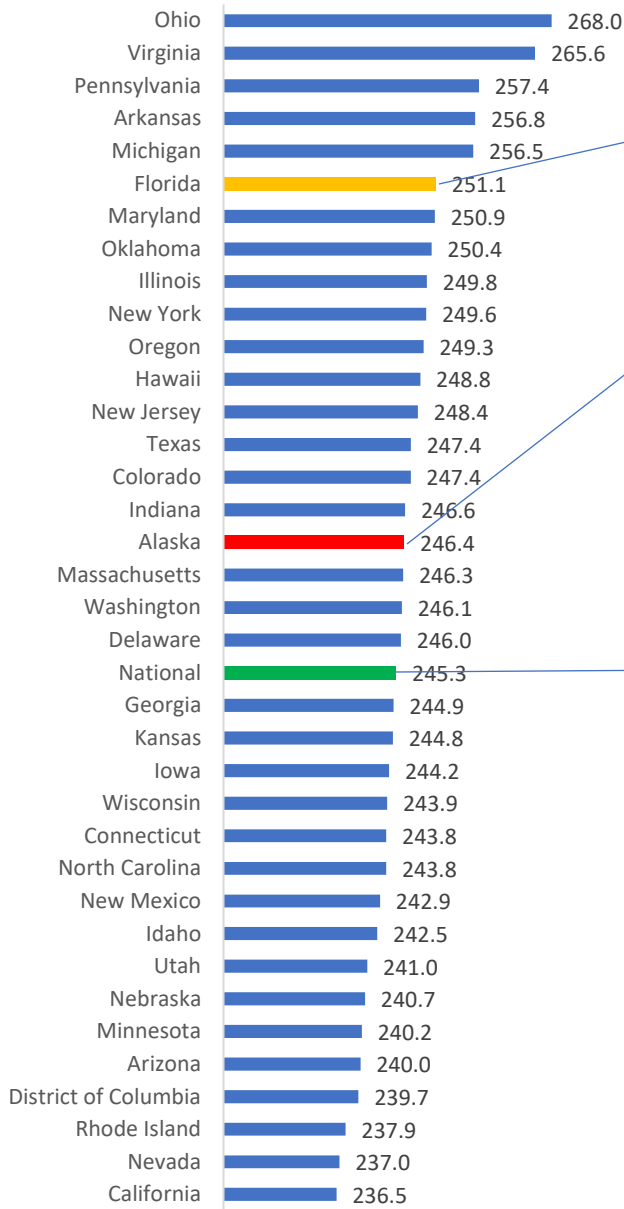
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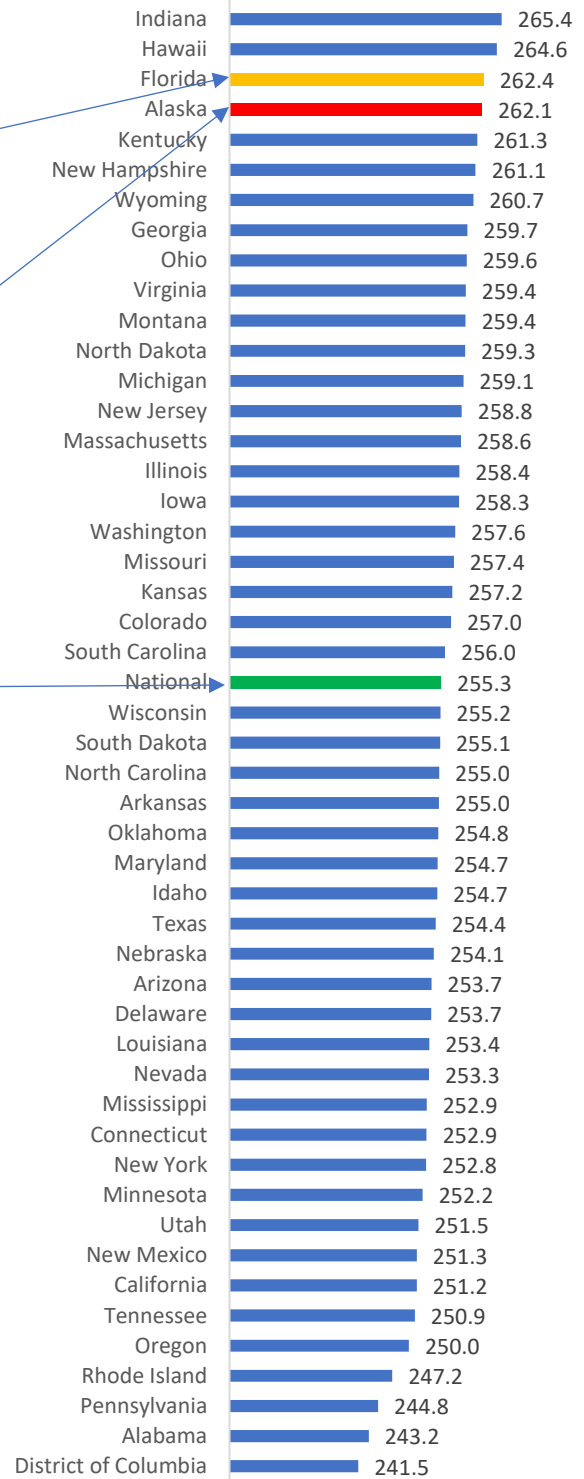
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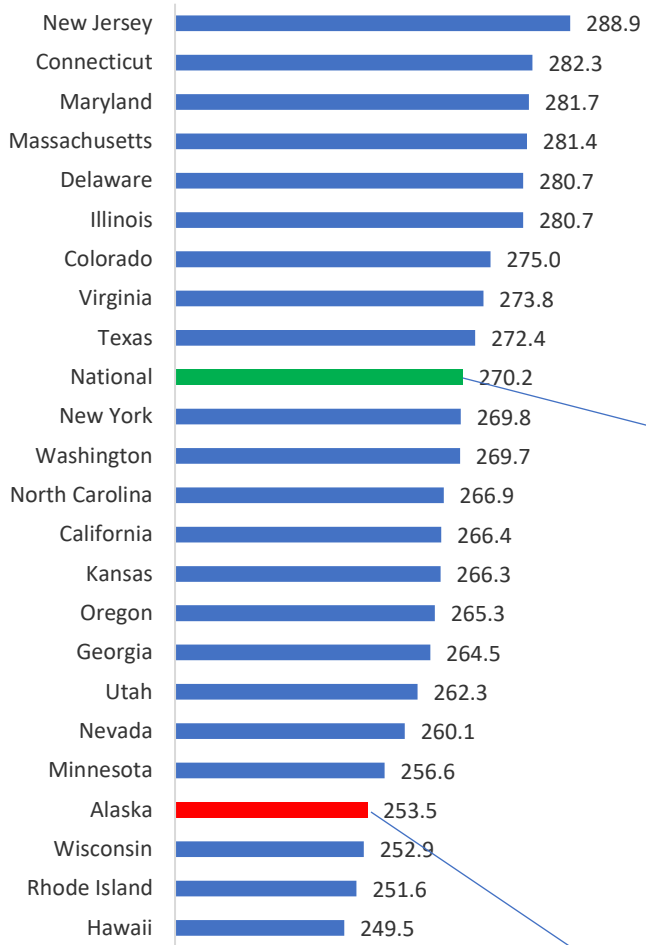
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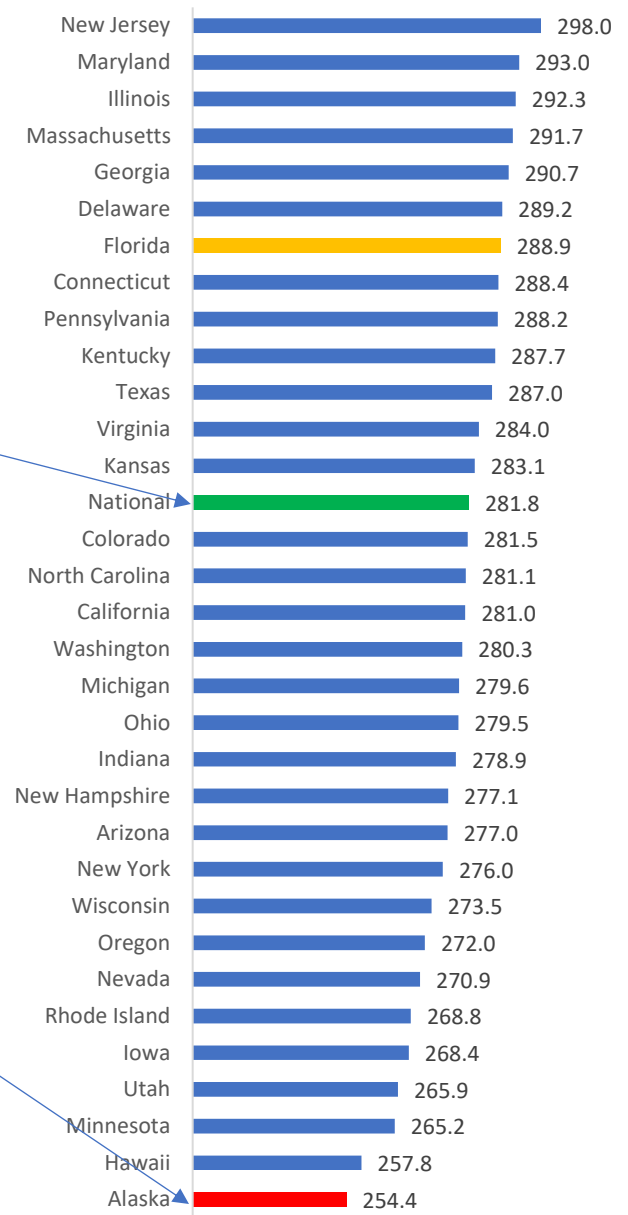
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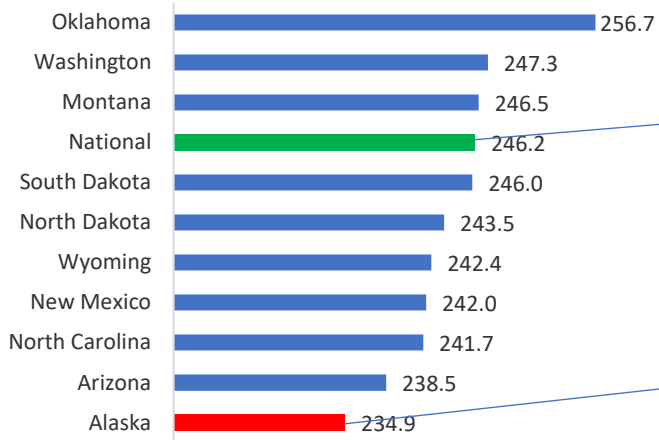
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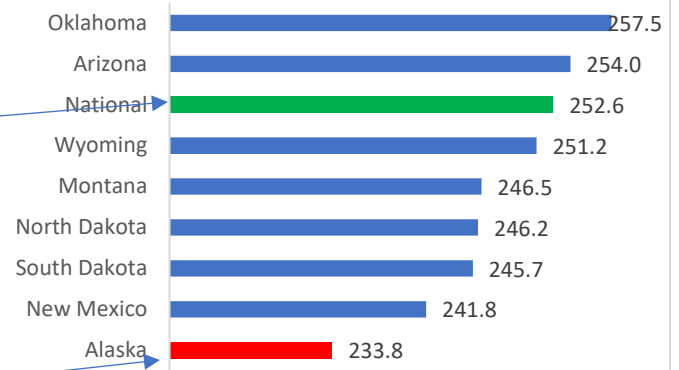
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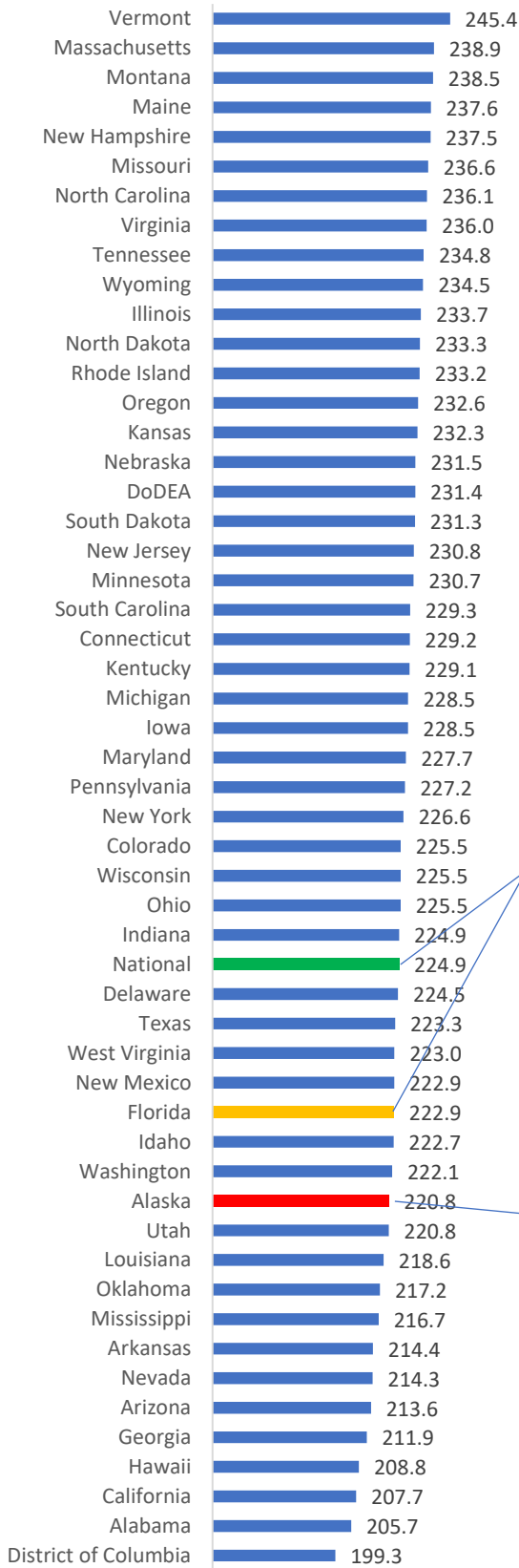
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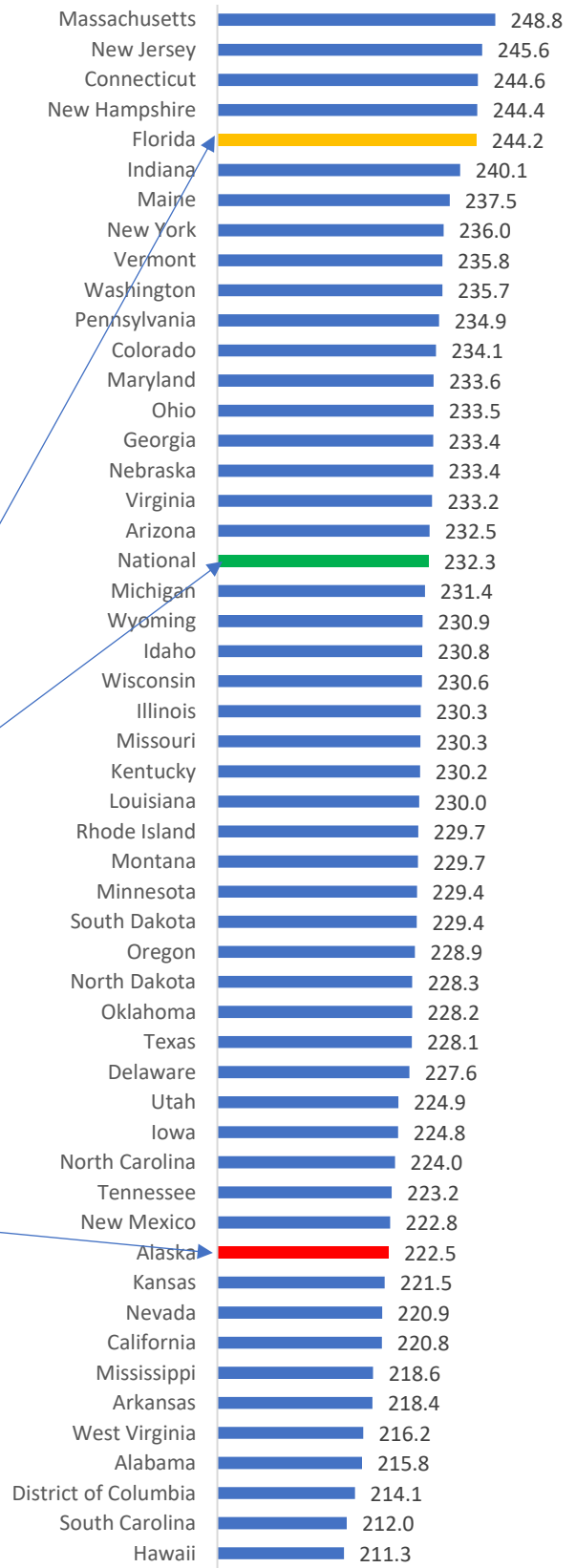
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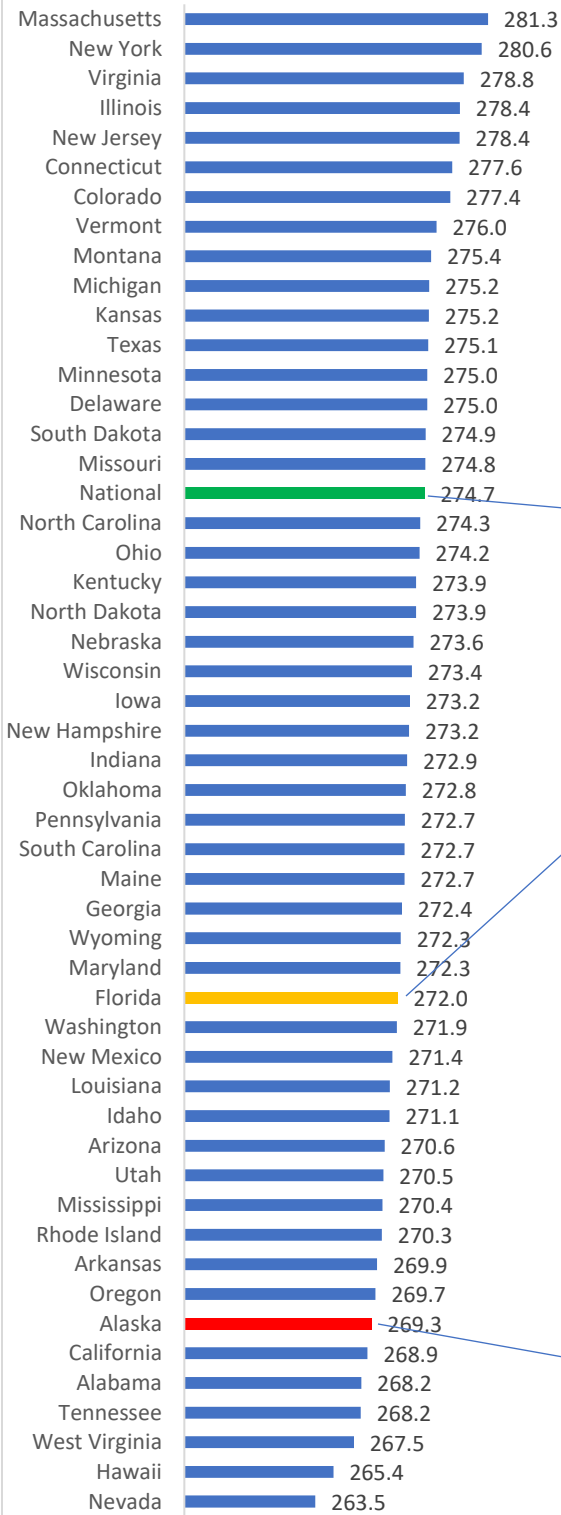
2003 NAEP 8th Grade Reading Students with Disabilities



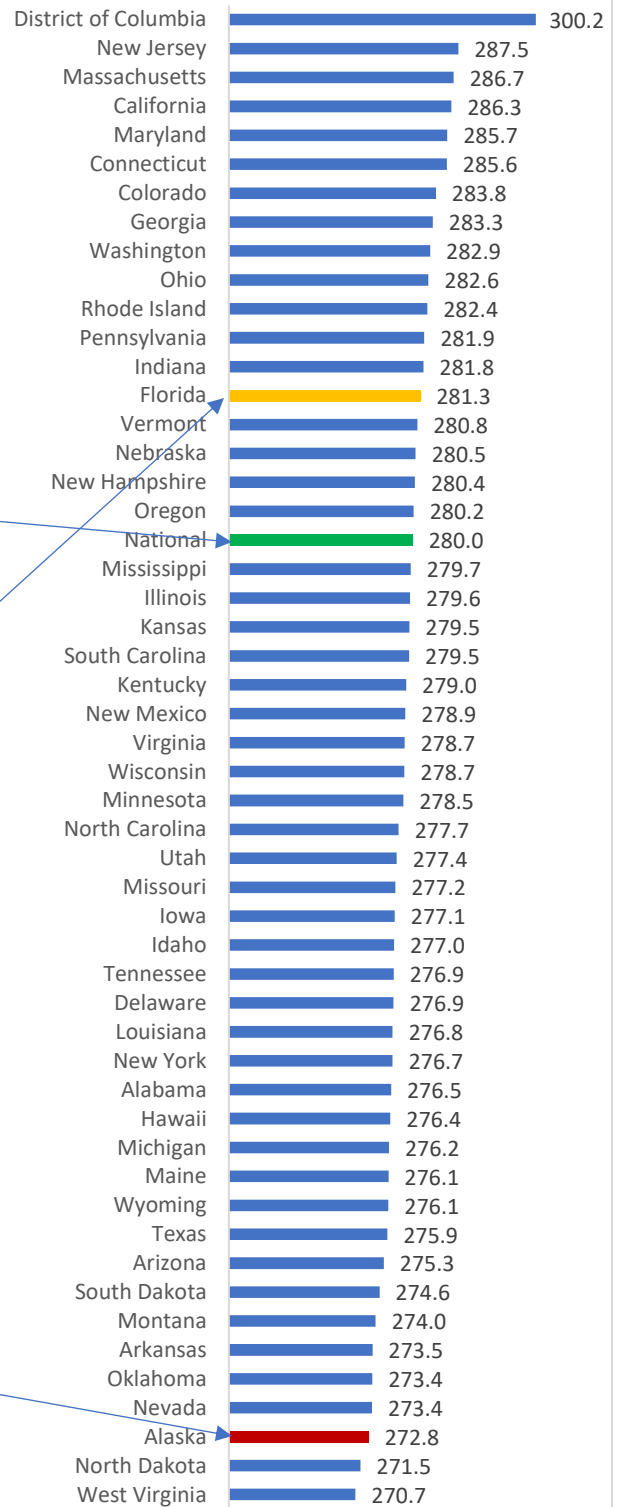
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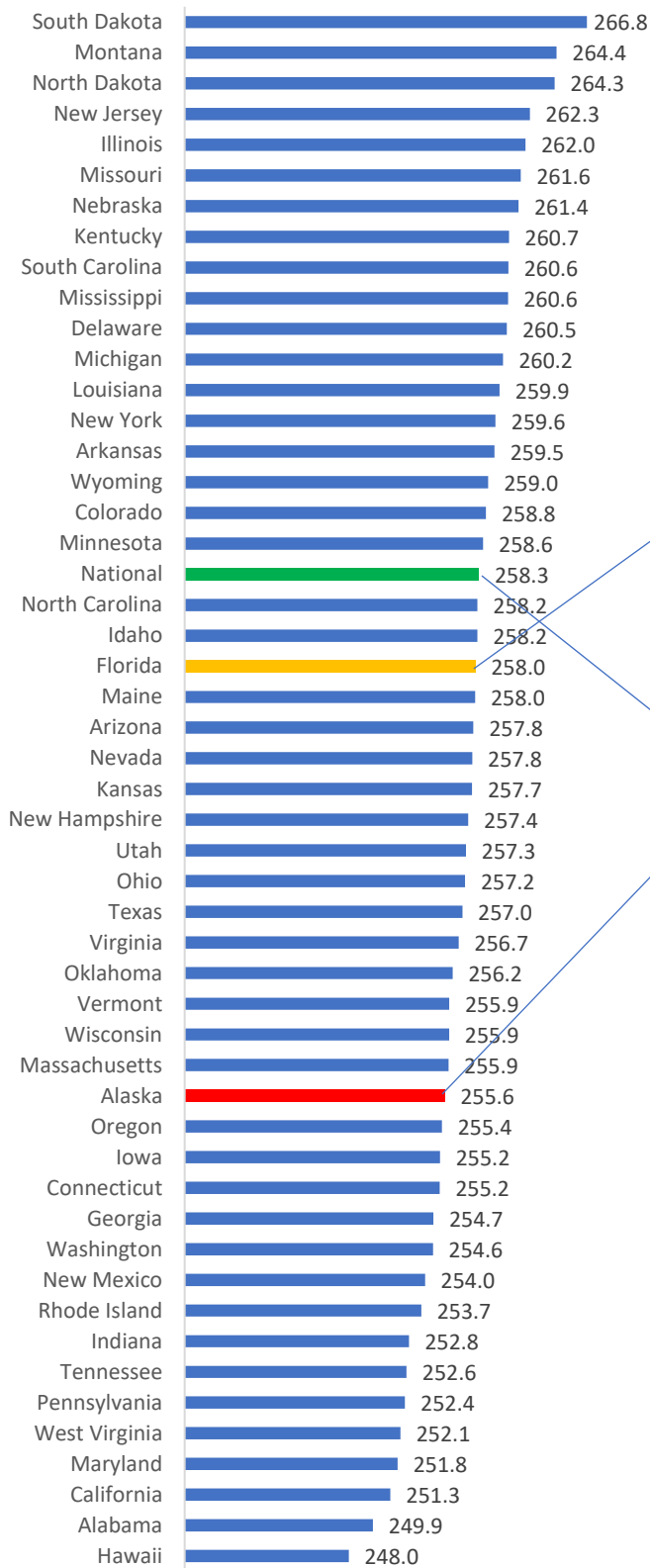
2003 NAEP 8th Grade Reading White Non-Free or Reduced Lunch



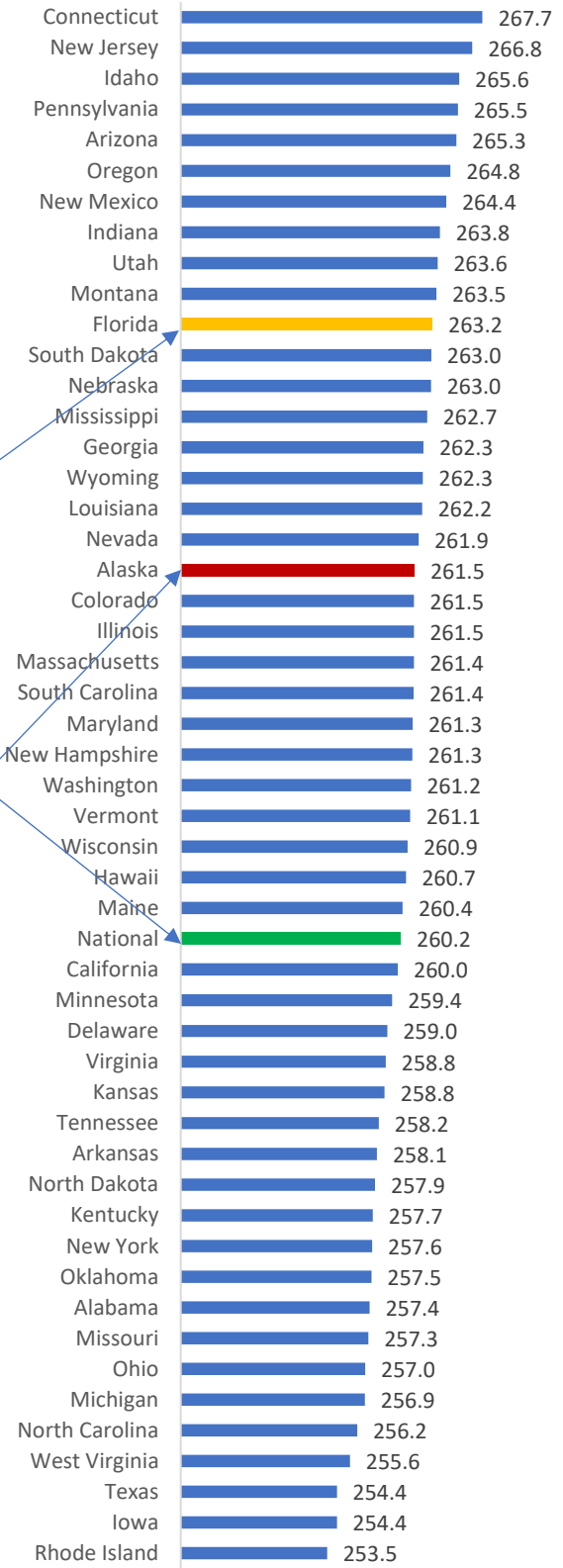
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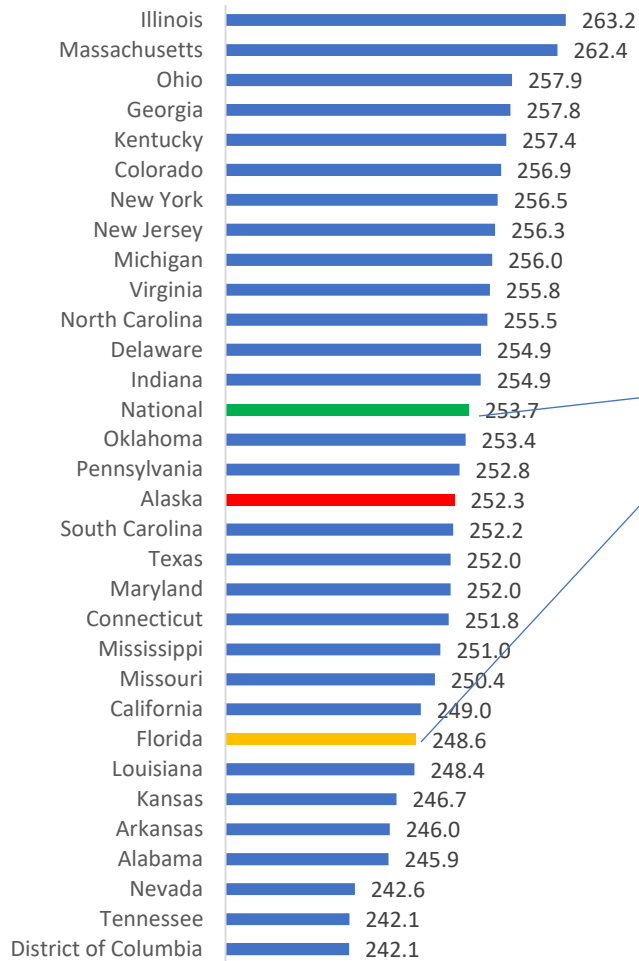
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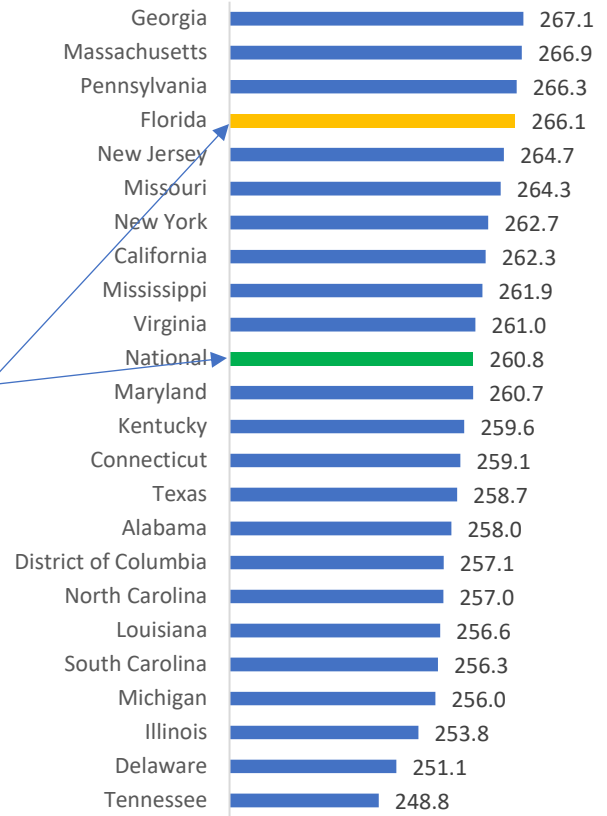
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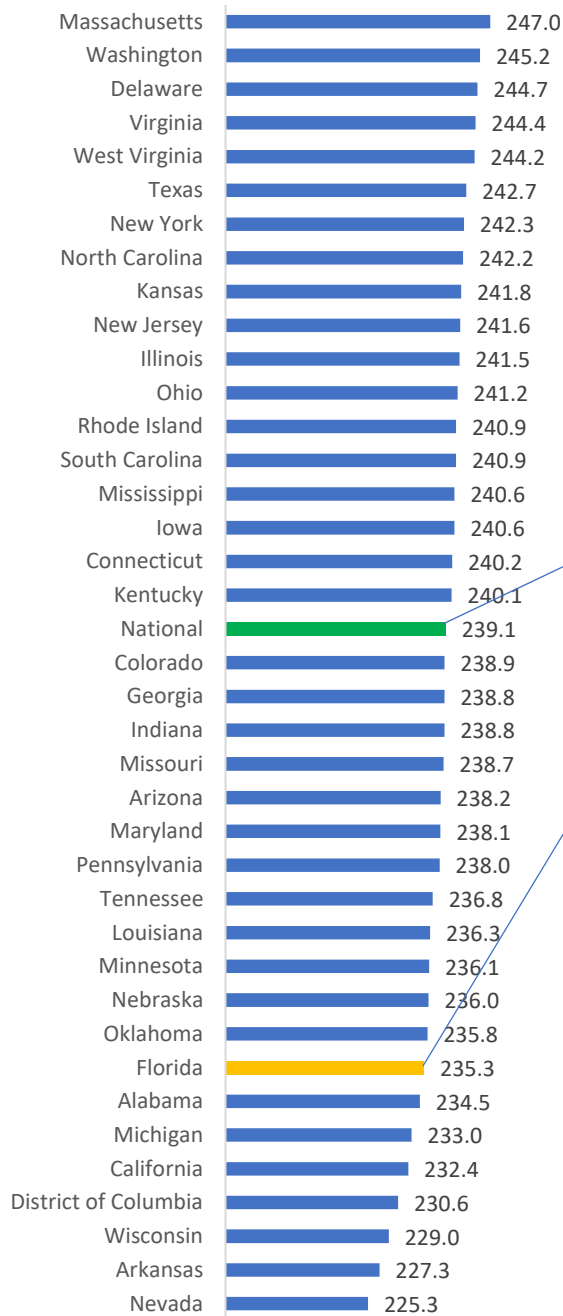
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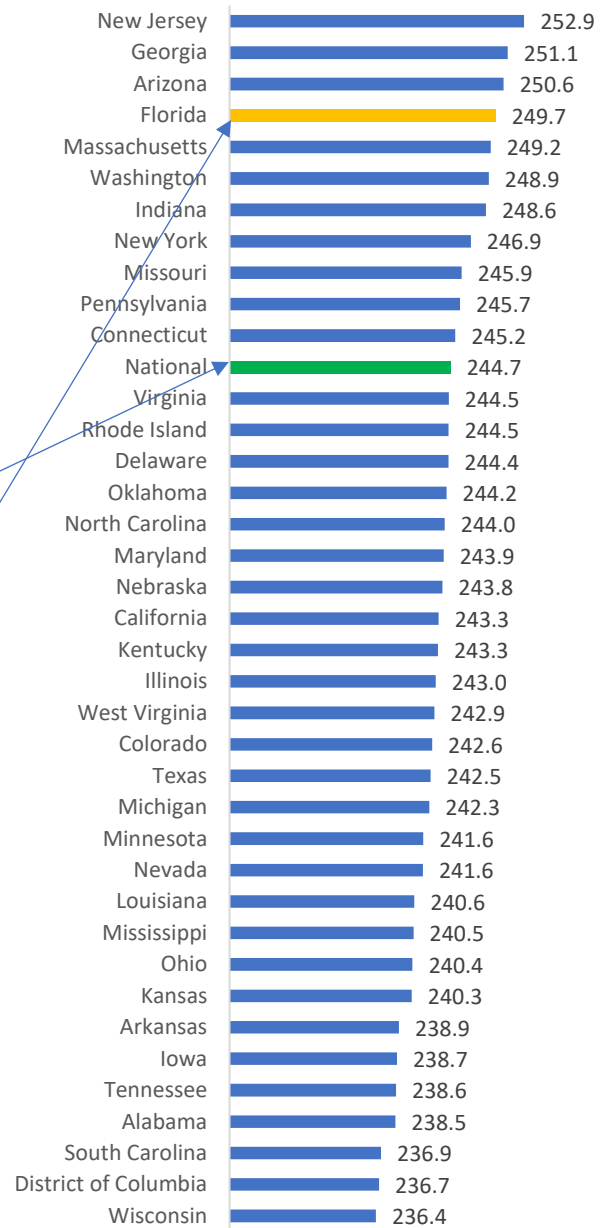
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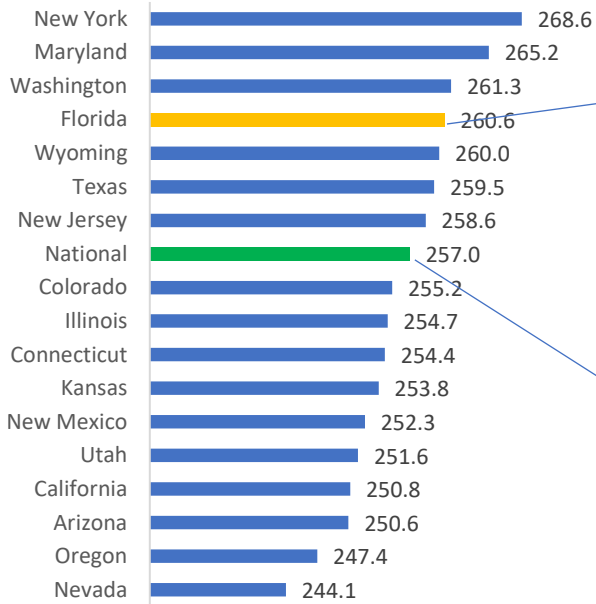
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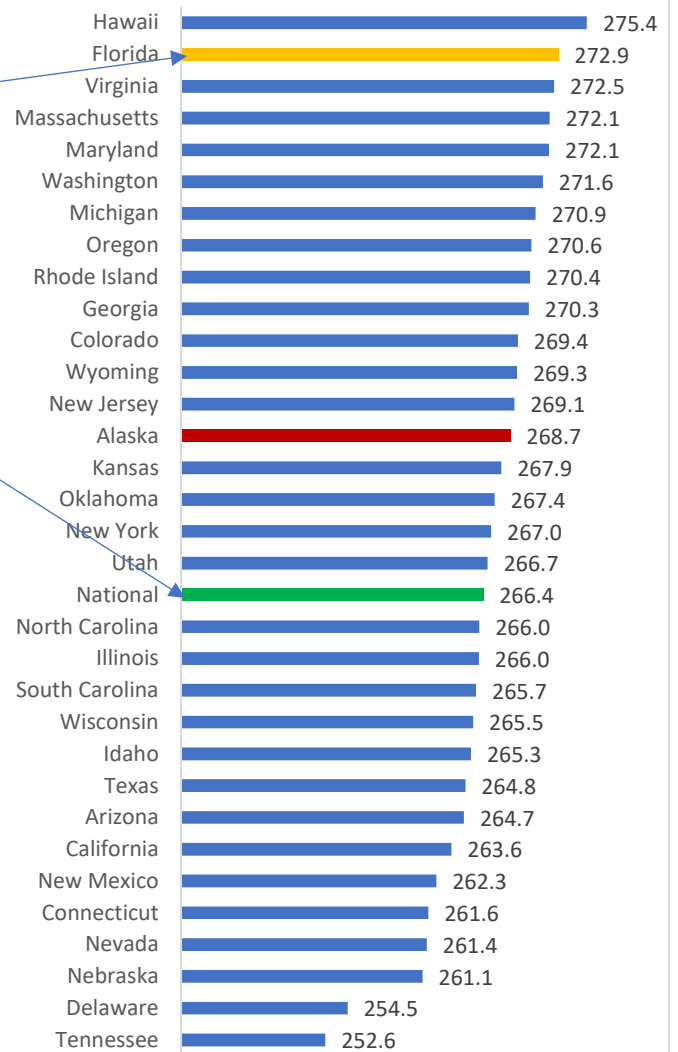
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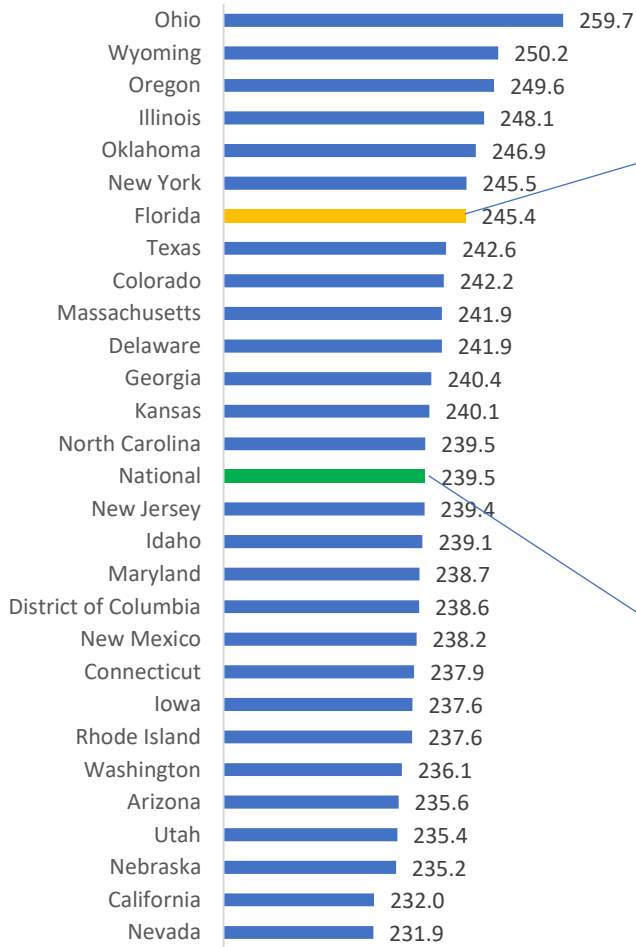
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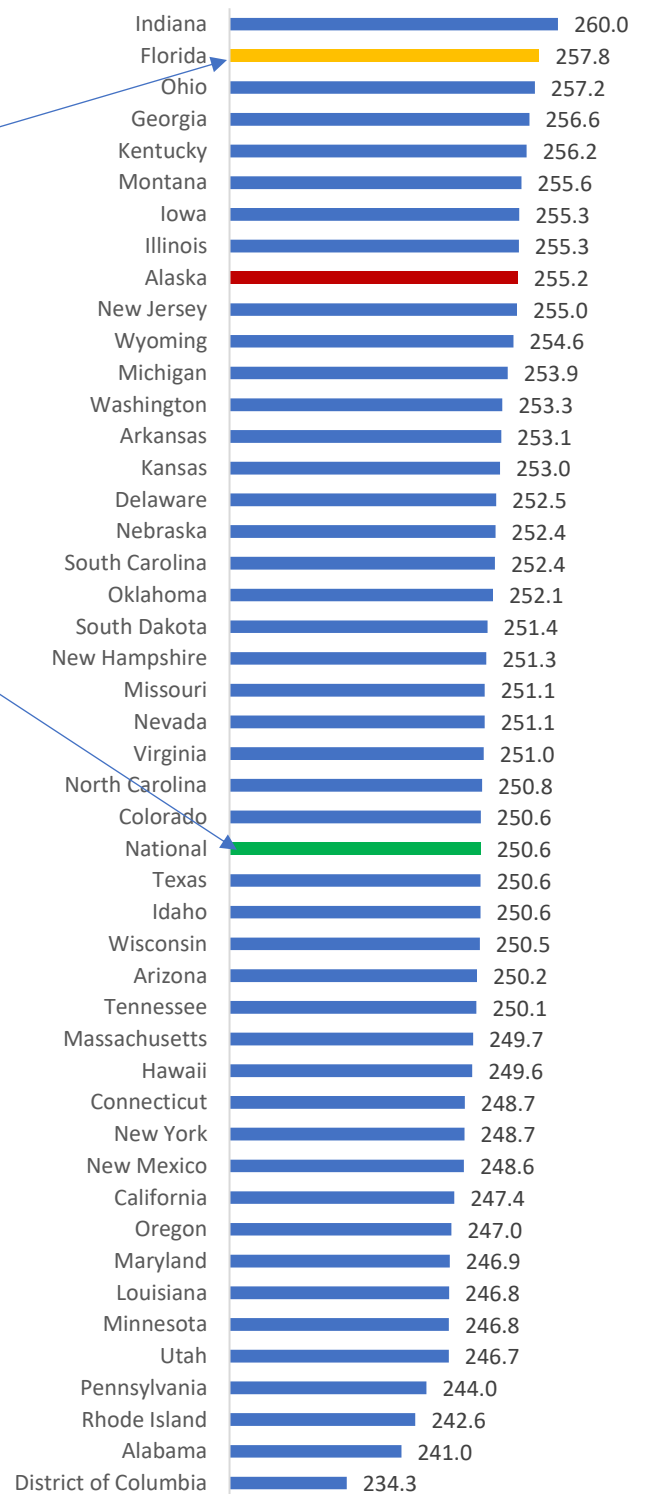
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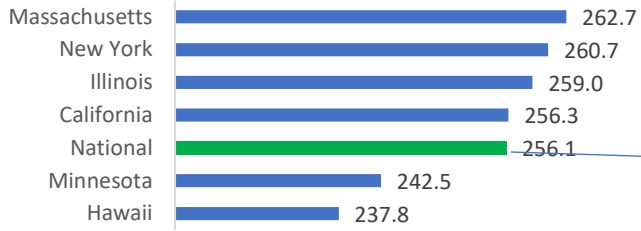
2003 NAEP 8th Grade Reading Hispanic Free or Reduced Lunch



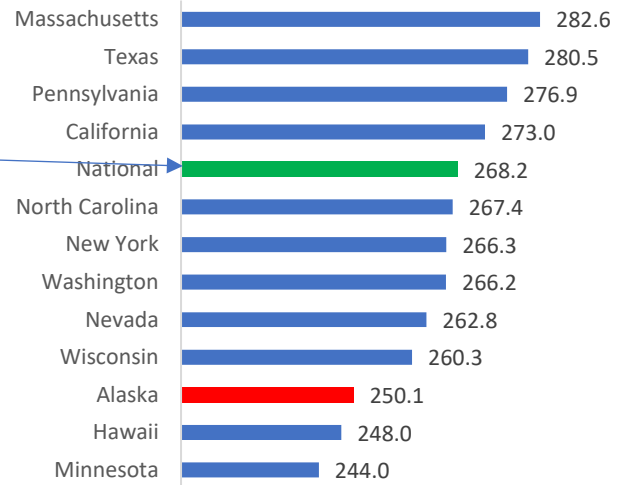
2017 NAEP 8th Grade Reading Hispanic Free or Reduced Lunch



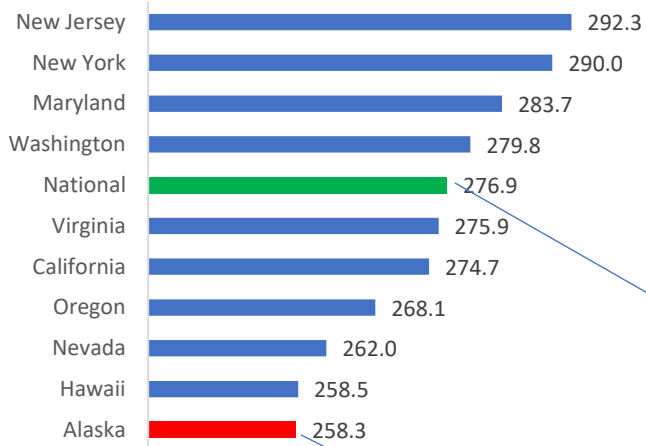
2003 NAEP 8th Grade Reading Asian Free or Reduced Lunch



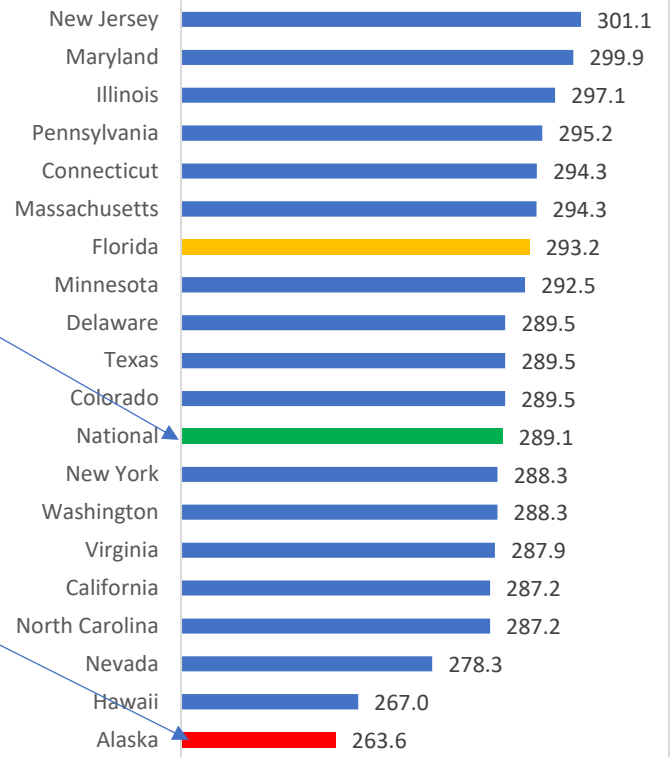
2017 NAEP 8th Grade Reading Asian Free or Reduced Lunch



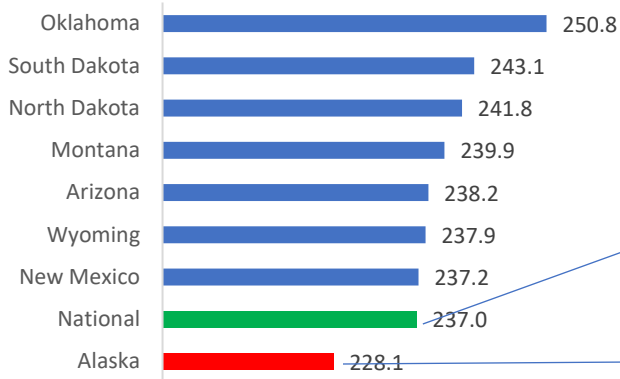
2003 NAEP 8th Grade Reading Asian Non-Free or Reduced Lunch



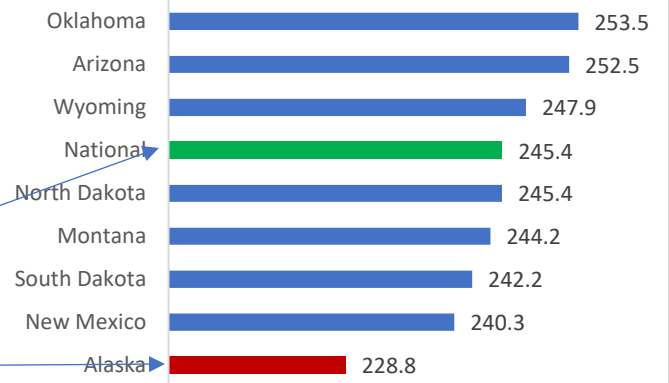
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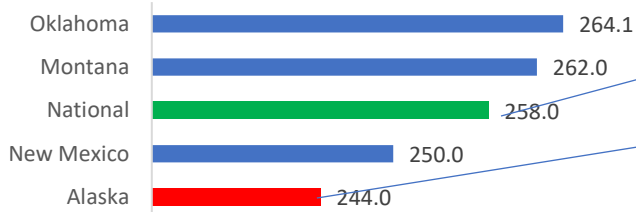
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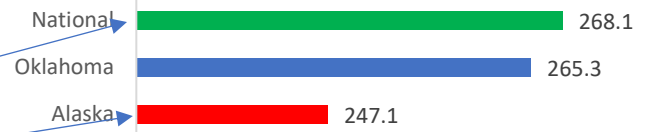
2017 NAEP 8th Grade Reading Native Free or Reduced Lunch



2003 NAEP 8th Grade Reading Native Non-Free or Reduced Lunch



2017 NAEP 8th Grade Reading Native Non-Free or Reduced Lunch



NAEP Test Scores/Score Changes 2003-2017

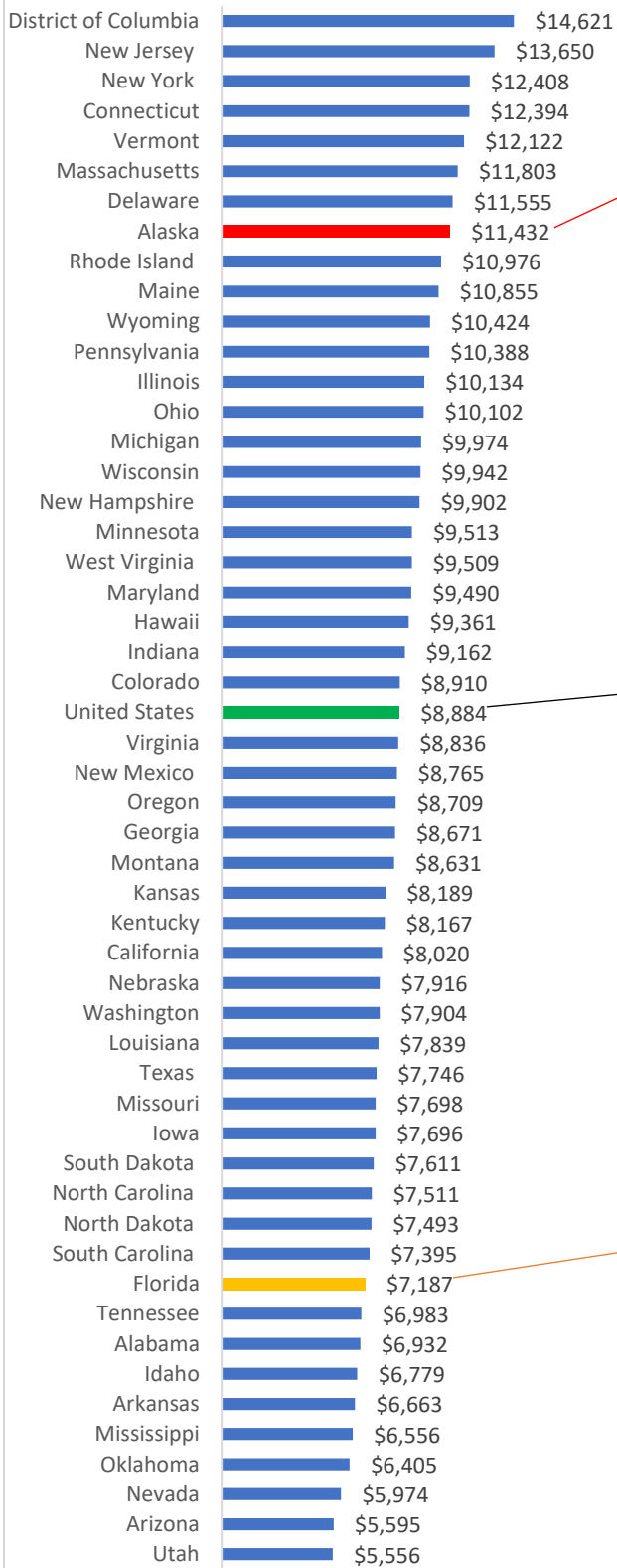
4th Grade Reading	Alaska			Florida			US Average		
	2003	2017	Gain/(Loss)	2003	2017	Gain/(Loss)	2003	2017	Gain/(Loss)
All Students	211.5	207.0	(4.5)	218.0	228.8	10.8	218.2	221.9	3.7
Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL)	191.7	189.8	(1.9)	204.7	219.3	14.6	201.3	208.2	6.9
Non-Free or Reduced Lunch	223.9	223.6	(0.3)	231.1	242.7	11.6	229.4	235.9	6.5
Students with Disabilities	177.1	164.3	(12.8)	184.1	208.6	24.5	185.1	189.9	4.8
Male	205.2	203.1	(2.1)	213.8	226.1	12.3	214.6	219.1	4.5
Female	218.2	211.3	(6.9)	222.3	230.5	8.2	221.9	224.9	3.0
White	226.4	223.2	(3.2)	229.1	238.5	9.4	228.6	231.8	3.2
Black	208.9	211.6	2.7	197.7	212.4	14.7	197.9	206.2	8.3
Hispanic	209.2	211.1	1.9	210.8	224.9	14.1	200.5	208.7	8.2
Asian	207.1	217.2	10.1	232.6	250.3	17.7	225.8	240.9	15.1
Native	184.4	169.5	(14.9)	NA	NA	NA	201.8	201.9	0.1
White FRL	211.6	208.4	(3.2)	217.1	228.1	11.0	212.7	217.4	4.7
White Non-FRL	231.3	229.9	(1.4)	232.6	245.1	12.5	232.6	238.6	6.0
Black FRL	200.5	NA	NA	192.7	209.7	17.0	192.7	201.4	8.7
Black Non-FRL	NA	NA	NA	214.1	225.8	11.7	211.2	220.2	9.0
Hispanic FRL	NA	208.3	NA	204.7	220.2	15.5	195.7	203.3	7.6
Hispanic Non-FRL	NA	NA	NA	223.9	238.1	14.2	213.1	223.8	10.7
Asian FRL	193.5	196.4	2.9	NA	NA	NA	209.7	221.1	11.4
Asian Non-FRL	216.3	229.1	12.8	NA	257.6	NA	234.6	248.7	14.1
Native FRL	173.2	160.9	(12.3)	NA	NA	NA	195.7	194.6	(1.1)
Native Non-FRL	203.1	191.2	(11.9)	NA	NA	NA	215.3	230.9	15.6

Orange = Below US Average Green = Above US Average

8th Grade Reading NAEP Test Scores/Score Changes 2003-2017									
8th Grade Reading	Alaska			Florida			US		
	2003	2017	Gain/(Loss)	2003	2017	Gain/(Loss)	2003	2017	Gain/(Loss)
All Students	256.4	257.7	1.3	257.3	266.6	9.3	263.3	266.6	3.3
Free or Reduced Lunch	239.3	246.2	6.9	245.2	257.4	12.2	246.6	253.3	6.7
Non-Free or Reduced Lunch	262.9	267.9	5.0	267.3	278.2	10.9	271.5	277.5	6.0
Male	250.3	252.9	2.6	251.1	263.2	12.1	258.1	261.8	3.7
Female	262.9	262.8	(0.1)	263.4	270.1	6.7	268.6	271.6	3.0
White	267.9	269.7	1.8	268.4	274.5	6.1	272.3	274.8	2.5
Black	248.9	245.6	(3.3)	239.2	253.5	14.3	244.5	249.4	4.9
Hispanic	246.4	262.1	15.7	251.1	262.4	11.3	245.3	255.3	10.0
Asian	253.4	254.4	1.0	NA	288.9	NA	270.2	281.8	11.6
Native	234.9	233.8	(1.1)	NA	NA	NA	246.2	252.6	6.4
Students With Disabilities	220.8	222.5	1.7	222.9	244.2	21.3	224.9	232.3	7.4
White FRL	255.6	261.5	5.9	258.1	263.3	5.2	258.3	260.2	1.9
White Non-FRL	269.3	272.8	3.5	272.1	281.3	9.2	274.3	280.1	5.8
Black FRL	NA	NA	NA	235.3	249.7	14.4	239.1	244.7	5.6
Black Non-FRL	252.3	NA	NA	248.6	266.1	17.5	253.7	266.1	12.4
Hispanic FRL	NA	255.2	NA	245.4	257.8	12.4	239.5	250.6	11.1
Hispanic Non-FRL	NA	268.7	NA	260.6	272.9	12.3	257.1	266.1	9.0
Asian FRL	NA	250.1	NA	NA	NA	NA	256.1	268.2	12.1
Asian Non-FRL	258.3	263.6	5.3	NA	293.2	NA	276.9	289.1	12.2
Native FRL	228.1	228.8	0.7	NA	NA	NA	237.1	245.4	8.3
Native Non-FRL	244.1	247.2	3.1	NA	NA	NA	258.1	268.2	10.1

Orange = Below US Average Green = Above US Average

2003 K-12 Spending Per Student in Average Daily Attendance



2017 K-12 Spending Per Student in Average Daily Attendance

