

## **Governor Stitt Delivers 2025 State of the State Address**

OKLAHOMA CITY (February 3, 2025) - Today, Governor Kevin Stitt delivered his State of the State address to Oklahoma's 60th Legislature, outlining his agenda for the 2025 legislative session. Governor Stitt's priorities include protecting Oklahoma taxpayers, making our state the best in the nation for business, safeguarding our savings, and defending the Oklahoma way of life. Read the speech in full below:  
Lieutenant Governor Matt Pinnell.

Speaker Kyle Hilbert and President Pro Tem Lonnie Paxton.

Members of the 60th Legislature.

Members of the Judiciary.

Statewide elected officials.

Tribal leaders.

To my cabinet members – thank you for your service to our great state.

To my beautiful wife Sarah, who has inspired hope in Oklahomans across our state.

And my mom and dad, thank you for being her today and for your support and love.

To my children who are with us today, I know it was either go to school or go hear dad talk.

Glad you're here today.

And to my fellow Oklahomans.

I'm so thankful to my Heavenly Father for letting me stand before you to deliver my 7th state of the state.

I'm excited to make 2025 the best year in our state's history.

Some of you are new to this building.

I'm looking forward to working with you on behalf of all four million Oklahomans.

Many of you are seasoned veterans.

We've gotten so much done in the last 6 years together.

We built the largest savings account our state has ever seen.

We passed the largest tax cut in state history.

Our economy is the strongest it's ever been.

We have become a top ten state for business.

We are number four for GDP growth.

We are number two in lowest cost of doing business.

We are number eight in net migration to our state.

We have 3,500 fewer kids in foster care than we did when I took office.

The State of our state is the strongest it's ever been.

And we are not done yet.

Let's continue to build on this progress and make Oklahoma the very best state to live, to work, and to raise our families.

For those of us in this room, I want to remind you, we are here for such a time as this.

We will face challenges, but we're stronger when we face them together as fellow Oklahomans and fellow Americans.

I've thought a lot about what we've been called here to do - to build on the success of those who came before us, to steward what we have been given, and to dream about what's possible for our kids and grandkids.

I believe we're here to pursue something greater than ourselves - something that will show the world what Oklahoma is all about.

Winston Churchill said, "The price of greatness is responsibility."

That means sacrificing now for future benefit.

The reality is there is going to be pain either way – the pain of discipline now, or the pain of regret later.

Many of us have witnessed that over the last 6 years.

In 2018, the state was facing massive budget deficits and we had nothing in savings.

Over the next six years, we said no to good ideas in the moment so we could say yes to the well-being of future generations of Oklahomans.

Because of that discipline, we got to come together as Republicans and Democrats to say yes to cutting the grocery tax last year.

This makes life more affordable for millions of Oklahomans across our state when inflation is crushing working families.

As we begin this new session, we will be faced with many “good” ideas.

The greatness of our state depends on discipline and the willingness to set the right priorities, even when it’s difficult.

In 2019, I said the Oklahoma turnaround starts right here, right now.

And we’ve seen that turnaround happen.

Let’s not go back to 2018.

I want to set a savings floor of \$4 billion dollars to ensure we can weather any financial storm.

It’s conservative policies like this that protect the American dream in Oklahoma.

But what is the American dream?

On its face, it’s the ability to have a family, own a home, have a good job, and build the life you want.

It springs from the belief that with hard work and resilience you can accomplish anything God puts on your heart.

But the American Dream is not guaranteed.

We have to have the courage to fight for it.

This past election signaled a shift in the way we think as a nation.

More and more, Americans are moving away from the extremes and turning back to the values that have always defined our success: personal responsibility, resilience, family values, and hard work.

Not DEI, government mandates, or regulations.

Not extreme gender ideology, Green New Deals, or open borders.

Americans voted for courage.

They voted for freedom.

They voted for the American Dream, not more government.

We have a mandate to support and pass conservative, limited government legislation that makes the American Dream possible for all four million Oklahomans.

In order to do that, we need to commit to these four principles that Oklahomans voted for.

We need to:

- 1 - Protect Oklahoma taxpayers.
- 2 - Be the Best State for Business
- 3 - Safeguard our Savings
- 4 - Protect the Oklahoma Way of Life

These ideas aren't controversial, but they will require tough choices. They will require sacrifice.

They will require that we trust that Oklahomans know how to spend their money better than the government can.

That we trust that businesses want to make our state better for everyone by creating jobs and investing in their communities.

That we say no to the good now so we can say yes to the great later.

That we put our constituents over special interests at all costs.

The price of greatness is responsibility.

We need to ask ourselves: how big should government be?

States like Texas and Florida spend less per person than any other state.

They also have no income tax.

And you don't hear anyone complaining about their roads, schools or hospitals.

States all around us – Nebraska, Missouri, Arkansas, Colorado and Louisiana – are cutting their income taxes and have lower rates than we do.

If we don't act quickly, we are going to be left behind and we'll be considered a high tax state.

So I'm calling for a half and a path – A half point cut to the individual and business income tax and a path to zero income tax.

I like to remind the naysayers when we cut taxes, the money doesn't disappear.

It simply stays in Oklahomans' pockets and gets reinvested in our economy.

In times of excess revenue, Oklahomans should keep more of their hard-earned money.

That is how we keep pace with our competition and protect Oklahoma taxpayers.

It's no secret.

Left unrestrained, government will always grow and grow and grow.

It's just like the lobbyist bar tabs at Broadway 10.

President Trump and Elon Musk, through DOGE, will determine the economic trajectory of our nation.

By cutting the size of the federal government, we can finally start having an honest conversation about our national debt.

If we continue on the path we're on, we'll be caught in a death spiral.

Government is overspending and causing inflation to rise rapidly.

To deflect the burden of rising costs, federal government expands benefits for more people.

More people end up reliant on the government, resulting in more deficit spending.  
It's a great big cycle.

And now, we're spending a quarter of our federal income – 25% – to make interest-only payments on our national debt.

That's more than we spend on our national defense.

I was at Mar-a-Lago a few weeks ago and talked to President Trump about DOGE at the state level.

I'm excited about the momentum, and we're going to build on it here in Oklahoma.

Today, I'm launching DOGE-OK to keep the focus on flat budgets and limited government.

For years, I've instructed my cabinet secretaries and agency directors to shrink employee count and cut unnecessary contracts.

I am committed to having fewer state employees at the end of my term than when I took office in 2019.

I also mandated an end to work from home policies for state employees to better serve the people of our state.

Even still, we have public officials who have asked the Legislature to double the size of their budget.

Our constituents voted for fiscal conservatism, not growing government.

If people hear one thing I say, it's that I want Oklahoma to be the best state for business.

By being the best state for business, we're paving the way to be the best state for education, the best state for infrastructure, and the best state for families.

Rising tides lift all boats.

The world is taking notice of our efforts.

This past year, a manufacturing company announced that it's going to invest \$620 million dollars in Oklahoma, bringing thousands of jobs and spurring more economic growth.

Every day, people from around the world are chasing the American Dream all the way to places like Stillwater, Guymon, Madill and Inola.

In just the last year, 274 businesses opened their doors or expanded their operations in our state.

Entrepreneurs created over 31,000 new jobs, lifting up their communities and contributing to our state.

This is not an accident.

Here in Oklahoma, we have business friendly policies and the most affordable, reliable energy anywhere thanks to limited government, common sense, and clean burning natural gas.

Because of that, our state has more opportunities than ever.

In my last state of the state, I said I wanted Oklahoma to be the high-tech data center capital of the world.

That vision is becoming reality.

Google continues to invest in its data center in Pryor, Oklahoma, and now it's one of its largest in the world.

A few weeks ago, President Trump announced a \$20 billion dollar investment in data centers across the country – and Oklahoma is on that list.

Those of us in this room know there is no better place than Oklahoma.

This is a massive opportunity to create more jobs for people in our state and to continue to put us on the map as the best state for business.

Let's keep building on our business friendly policies.

I've been vocal about getting business courts set up in Oklahoma.

I saw court systems in other states playing politics with people's businesses.

I wanted to make sure that never happens in Oklahoma.

I'm grateful for the work Jon Echols and Secretary Jeff Starling have done to research and execute this idea.

Let's get business courts finished this session, and make sure business disputes and complicated contracts will be handled by judges with business expertise.

It's policies like this that make our state something to brag about.

In addition to our amazing business friendly policies, we have a wealth of natural resources to make our state the best place to do business.

Oil and gas giants like Devon, Continental and ONEOK continue to grow their footprint here.

Expand Energy made its home in Oklahoma City and is the largest natural gas producer in the nation.

Our energy industry is a driving force in our economy, and when they are free from politically motivated barriers and overregulation, they can power our nation and the world.

That means more businesses can come online and more electricity can be generated in our state.

I want to make 2025 the year of the Energy Abundance Agenda and continue to unleash Oklahoma's energy potential.

So let's make sure we can build more generation on the meter and behind the meter to keep our energy the most affordable and reliable in the nation.



Because we're top ten for business, it's time for us to become top ten in education.

When Oklahomans elected me, they elected a businessman with a fresh set of eyes to challenge the status quo.

We had spent too many years settling for an education system that was failing our kids.

So we ushered in the largest education freedom movement in the nation. And just recently, Oklahoma was ranked number four in the nation for education freedom.

I believe that when you inject competition, everyone gets better, and we're seeing that here in our school systems.

We passed open transfer in our state.

Now, kids aren't trapped in failing neighborhood schools.

Then, we passed a tax credit so money could follow the student.

Now, thousands of kids can go to the school where they learn best and where they're best equipped to succeed.

We paved the way for the first ever religious charter school in the nation.

I am so excited that the U.S. Supreme Court will hear this groundbreaking religious freedom case.

After all, the government shouldn't stand in the way of a parent's right to educate their children in line with their values.

But we also need to make sure kids are IN their classrooms.

I've had parents from all over the state reach out to me with concerns about virtual school days.

In some places in Oklahoma, kids are only required to be in their seats at school for 148 days a year.

For comparison, Kansas students are in their seats for 186 days every year. We all know that kids learn best when they're in the classroom with our great teachers.

It's just common sense.

Pro Tem Paxton is already focused on this and I'm excited to work with him and Senator Thompson to make sure kids are in their seats ready to learn.

Let's eliminate virtual days in our public schools.

If kids aren't leaving high school college ready or career ready, we haven't done our job.

I want to sign a bill that creates more internships and apprenticeships.

If we can get this right, we'll lead the nation in workforce development.

Companies from all around the world will move operations to Oklahoma because it'll be clear that we have the strongest workforce anywhere.

So I'm calling on businesses, schools, and universities to create 250 new apprenticeship and internship programs this year.

Let's get it done.

Now that we've got kids in the right classroom, they need to be free from distractions.

This past fall, I challenged schools to implement phone-free school policies.

I want to brag on Rob Miller.

He's here with us today.

Thanks for being here Rob.

He is the Superintendent of Bixby Public Schools.

Through his years in education, he's noticed a clear decline in his students' attention and performance as cell phone use has increased in his schools.

To him, the solution was clear. Kids learn better when they aren't distracted by cell phones and social media.

He implemented a cell phone free policy in Bixby Public Schools, and he's seen a huge improvement in his students.

I want to challenge the Legislature and school districts across the state to consider ways to make cell phone free schools a reality for all students.

It doesn't have to cost anything – it just needs to be effective for the students we serve.

Speaker Hilbert – I've enjoyed talking about this issue with you and I'm excited to get something across the finish line this session.

I'm proud of how our schools took the cell phone free challenge to make sure our students succeed, but all of that means nothing, if our kids aren't safe in their communities.

Our greatest responsibility as leaders is to protect all four million Oklahomans.

Americans made it clear – they want their President to defend our borders and protect our communities.

I sent our National Guard troops to Texas to help secure the southern border.

We vocally opposed sanctuary city policies and pushed for the deportation of criminals who were here illegally.

I'm so excited to have a law and order President back in the White House that will listen to the American people and our calls for safe communities.

On Day One in office, President Trump closed the border and made it clear that illegal immigration would no longer be tolerated.

I launched Operation Guardian here in Oklahoma to help keep communities safe.

I instructed Commissioner of Public Safety Tim Tipton and Department of Corrections Director Steve Harpe to be ready to assist the Trump administration as they begin deporting those who have committed crimes while here illegally.

After all, the Oklahoma taxpayers shouldn't be paying millions of dollars a year to keep criminals incarcerated when they shouldn't be in our state to begin with.

But to have safe communities, we also have to have some common sense. Let me tell you a story about a man named John Standfill.

John made some bad choices and spent 15 years in prison paying for them.

He served his time, paid his debt to society, and now is helping give other people second chances at OSU's Oklahoma City Center for Social Innovation.

That's simply unacceptable.

It's time to reform this system and get rid of what is essentially debtors' prison.

We know that high fees keep people trapped in this cycle and contribute to higher recidivism.

That doesn't make sense.

I want to change that structure and make sure that a second chance is actually a second chance and get rid of fines, fees and court costs for good.

John is here with us today.

John, thank you for letting me share your story today.

We've made so much progress together.

Nearly 40,000 Oklahomans have received a second chance because of our efforts.

We closed four prisons, saving Oklahoma taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

We are on a trajectory to top ten and we will continue to lead the nation in common sense criminal justice.

While I love telling people about our pro business policies, our great teachers, and our safe communities, at my core, I love to brag about how much we value faith and family in Oklahoma.

I wanted to cement this priority, so I created the Office of Faith Based Initiatives.

This office focuses on bringing the faith community and non-profit community together to solve problems that the government can't.

Daniel and May Cave lived in Choctaw, OK and lost their home and belongings in a Fall tornado.

The Office of Faith Based Initiatives helped connect the Caves with Harrah Baptist Church which provided them with meals, childcare, clothing, and moving assistance.

It was the perfect display of the Oklahoma Standard – neighbors walking with neighbors.

I want Oklahoma to be the example for the rest of the country when it comes to connecting churches and non-profits to people in need.

Daniel and May, thank you for being with us today.

The reality is that bills and press releases don't solve societal problems.

The real work begins at home with strong mothers and strong fathers.

For the past two years, I declared November "Family Month" and I encouraged Oklahomans to spend more intentional quality time together.

I'm looking forward to celebrating Family Month every year because now, more than ever, we need to promote strong families.

It is so clear that strong families are the drivers for success in nearly every area.

I say it all the time – kids need their moms AND their dads.

But right now, our nation is experiencing a crisis.

A crisis of fatherlessness.

The result? Less resilient families and less resilient children.

At the end of 2022, nearly 250,000 Oklahoma children were living without a father in the home.

Nationally, 71% of those who drop out of high school grew up without a present father.

66% of juveniles in state custody experienced fatherlessness.

But here's the secret – we have the power to change this.

The numbers don't lie.

Kids with engaged fathers are:

43% more likely to get As in school;

twice as likely to go to college;

and 80% less likely to spend time in jail.

We can turn the statistics around, just by continuing to uplift families and promote marriages.

That can start at the dinner table.

In my family, we've worked hard to make Friday night a sacred time for us to come together and share a meal.

Sarah and I use this time to talk with our kids and catch up on their week.

I challenge each of us to start with one extra meal.

Studies have shown that sharing family meals results in improved school performance, better family relationships, improved nutrition and lower likelihood of future substance abuse.

Let's take the opportunity to intentionally engage with our families.

I remember growing up in Norman, Friday night was family night.

After dinner, Mom would make popcorn, dad would turn on our favorite tv show, and we'd spend time together as a family.

Mom and Dad, I'm so grateful for how you led our family.

Thank you.

This is how we make the American Dream possible in Oklahoma.

If we want a strong nation, we have to have strong communities.

If we want to have strong communities, we have to have strong families.

If we want to have strong families, we MUST have strong fathers.

The health of our nation comes directly from having strong fathers in the home.

That's why I have put such an emphasis on fatherhood programs in my time in office.

But this isn't a policy idea or a funding request.

It's a request for each for us in this room to take the responsibility to lead our families well.

Our positions as elected leaders are not the most important positions we hold.

Our roles as fathers and mothers and family members will do far more for the future of our society than the nameplate on our doors.

There is no higher calling than to raise up kids to be strong men and women of God and to instill in them the values and ethics that are essential to the success of our nation.

It takes courage to make the choice to be that present mother or father or grandparent.

The American Dream depends on families who are willing to step up and change the status quo.

President Ronald Reagan said, "There is no institution more vital to our Nation's survival than the American family. Here the seeds of personal character are planted, the roots of public virtue first nourished. Through love and instruction, discipline, guidance and example, we learn from our mothers and fathers these values that will shape our private lives and our public citizenship."

I want that to be our legacy – a state where the American Dream is alive and well because of strong families.

Every generation has the same longing for the American Dream.

In the United States, where every state is a laboratory of democracy, we can see in real time which policies promote the American Dream, and which ones push it farther out of reach.

I want Oklahoma to be known around the world as the state where businesses come because they know that they can operate freely without fear of gotcha bureaucrats or burdensome regulations.

The state where parents have the freedom to educate their children in line with their values.

The state where families flock because they know their kids can grow up in a safe, hopeful environment.

The state where neighbors care for each other and there is always hope for tomorrow.

Oklahoma is a haven. A shining city on a hill.

And the American Dream is alive and well in Oklahoma.

May God Bless you and may God continue to bless the great state of Oklahoma.