



THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR J. KEVIN STITT

Media Contact: press@gov.ok.gov

GOVERNOR KEVIN STITT'S 2026 STATE OF THE STATE

Conservative Reforms to Secure Savings & Protect the American Dream in Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY (February 2, 2026) – As Governor Kevin Stitt prepares to deliver his State of the State address around 12:45 p.m. CT today, Oklahoma is stronger than ever. During the last seven years, the state has seen record savings, tax cuts, and significant growth.

In his final State of the State, Governor Stitt will reflect on progress during his administration and share his priorities for the legislative session ahead.

Key themes and speech excerpts include:

1. Calling for a Vote: Conservative State Questions

Governor Stitt will ask the Legislature to send key issues back to the people for a vote.

- Slow the Growth of Government: "Let's codify a 3% annual cap on recurring spending growth in our Constitution and lock in future cuts with ironclad rules."
- End automatic property tax hikes: "We owe Oklahomans real relief, not temporary fixes and election-cycle talking points."
- Reform Medicaid expansion: "In 10 years, Medicaid is projected to eat up 37 percent of our annual budget - \$6 billion dollars... send a question to voters that would allow adjustments."
- End crime-ridden marijuana industry: "Send the marijuana issue back to the vote of the people and shut it down."

2. Securing Savings: Taxpayer Endowment Fund

Governor Stitt will call on the Legislature to invest \$750 million of existing reserves for long-term growth – an estimated \$3.2 billion in 20 years. Other states – including Wyoming, Alaska, and Texas – already do so successfully.

- "Today, I call on this Legislature to create the Taxpayer Endowment Fund-seeding it with \$750 million dollars of existing savings... let's lock in these gains and let them grow for the future."

3. Protecting the American Dream

Governor Stitt will champion investment accounts for the next generation and home ownership protection for every Oklahoman.

- Trump Accounts: Re-appropriate \$12 million for \$250 per newborn: "Oklahoma is the epicenter of the American Dream, and we can and should invest in these accounts for every Oklahoma kid born this year."
- "Together, we're not just talking about the American Dream, we're securing it for the next generation."

Additional Priorities to Secure Oklahoma's Future:

- Eliminate OSSAA: "Your ability to play sports shouldn't be contingent on your parent's ability to afford an attorney."
- Expand charter schools: "If we want top-tier charters to come to Oklahoma, they should be able to go straight to the statewide board for authorization instead of playing of "mother may I." with local school districts."
- Remove the cap from the Parental Choice Tax Credit: "Let's eliminate the cap... Let the money follow the student. Put parents in charge."
- Appointment of education superintendent: "Oklahoma's next Governor should have the authority to appoint the Superintendent of Public Instruction."
- One Oklahoma: "All laws should apply equally to all Oklahomans. No exceptions."

"We have a rendezvous with destiny. Let's grab it with the tenacity and grit that sets us apart as Oklahomans," said Governor Stitt.

Full speech, **EMBARGOED** until delivery around 12:45 p.m. today, is available below:

State of the State 2026
As prepared for delivery:

Lieutenant Governor Matt Pinnell – It's been great to serve alongside you for the last 7 years.

Speaker Kyle Hilbert and President Pro Tem Lonnie Paxton – thank you for your leadership in this building. It's an honor to serve with you.

Members of the 60th Legislature and statewide elected officials – I'm looking forward to working with each of you this session.

Members of the Judiciary – thank you for being here today.

To my cabinet members – thank you for everything you do for Oklahoma.

I want to extend a special thank you to those of you who have served since the beginning, Secretary Blayne Arthur and Secretary Tim Gatz.

Your dedication to the State of Oklahoma and the people we serve will continue to pay dividends for generations to come. Thank you.

To my boomerang team – David Ostrowe, Donelle Harder, and John Budd – we started together in 2019. Thank you for returning to state service to help me complete Oklahoma's turnaround.

How about the world champions - the Oklahoma City Thunder, a team that embodies the true spirit of Oklahoma.

I'm excited to have Will Syring and Dan Mahoney from the Thunder Executive team here with me today.

To my mom and dad, thank you for being here today. Your prayers and support have been invaluable throughout my life. I'm so grateful for you.

To my children – being your dad is the greatest job in the world. Thank you for the sacrifices you have made so that I could serve our state. I did it so you and your fellow Oklahomans can chase your American Dream.

To the most beautiful and elegant First Lady in the nation – You've kept our family strong, you've been a constant source of wisdom and prayer, and you've been my steadfast partner throughout our marriage. Thank you and I love you.
I thank God for this opportunity to stand before you today.

As King Solomon prayed for wisdom, that's been my prayer and will continue to be for this last session and for those who come after me.

And to my fellow Oklahomans.

It has been one of the greatest honors of my life to serve as your Governor. It's amazing to see all we have accomplished together over the last 7 years. The state of our state is the strongest it's ever been.

And ladies and gentlemen, we're not done yet.

When I first addressed this chamber in 2019, before I had any idea what challenges awaited us, I promised a turnaround for our state.

I cast a clear vision for Oklahoma: To be a top ten state.

But to understand where Oklahoma is going, it helps to remember how America even came to be.

And in our 250th year as a nation, we reflect on that story.

Our story is one built on gritty ambition. It's a story where nothing was given, but everything is possible – where your future could be determined not by the circumstances of your birth, instead, by what you are willing to work hard to build.

That spirit, the belief that opportunity is earned – not inherited – and that you can achieve anything you set your mind to, is the heartbeat of the United States of America.

Oklahoma is not just part of this American Dream. We are its purest expression. And this spirit is what has always defined Oklahoma.

Oklahoma is where bold dreams are possible.

I believe these last seven years have been the greatest in state history. We've gone from budget deficits to historic savings.

We increased public education funding more in my term as Governor than in the past 25 years combined.

At the same time, we've cut taxes by \$1.6 billion dollars and let Oklahomans keep more of their money.

We diversified our economy, maintaining one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation.

We've seen median income increase by nearly \$11,000.

While other states were locking down during COVID, forcing vaccine mandates or letting boys play in girls' sports, we protected individual liberties and religious freedom.

We gave Oklahomans a true second chance, shrinking our prison population by 25% while maintaining record low recidivism.

We've shown the nation why Oklahoma is the best place to pursue the American Dream.

Now, as we enter this session, let's keep this momentum going by uniting around three principles: reduce regulation, protect the vulnerable, and secure our state's future.

In 2019, with no money in reserve, I insisted that we limit our spending and build up our savings account.

I slammed the brakes on spending every dime we were authorized.

That approach protected Oklahoma so we could make capital improvements without growing headcount.

True sustainable budgeting demands discipline.

Let's work together this year to ensure we don't go back to the financial mess we inherited in 2019.

Recent federal shutdowns and a \$38 trillion dollar federal debt show us that the federal government isn't a reliable partner.

It's essential that we maintain a conservative financial position.

Let's be cautious with unfunded mandates, new agencies and new programs. There will be over 6200 bills considered this session.

Every bill will come with a tradeoff, and those often come in the form of spending more money.

Over the years, I've vetoed multiple spending bills that have added to our recurring expenses, yet many of those vetoes were overridden.

Tallying it all up, veto overrides of spending bills have cost the taxpayers nearly \$800 million in my time as Governor.

That's enough to cut nearly another point off the income tax.

We have to stand up for the taxpayer and advocate for the future of our state.

A government program rarely fixes a societal problem. But it sure makes some lobbyists rich.

Like Ronald Reagan said, you eventually run out of other peoples' money.

Last year, with your partnership, we delivered one of our greatest budget reform wins in history: the Path to Zero income tax – effectively capping spending in statute to protect taxpayers.

To preserve this progress, I'm calling for a State Question on the ballot. Let's codify a 3% annual cap on recurring spending growth in our Constitution and lock in future cuts with ironclad rules.

This keeps the growth of government in check and protects the Oklahoma taxpayers.

And where I have authority, I'll rein in welfare spending.

Government dependency is a trap. It robs self-reliance and balloons budgets.

I always say government programs should be a trampoline, not a hammock, but too often that is not the case.

Medicaid is Exhibit A – driving massive spending growth while enabling waste. In 10 years, Medicaid is projected to eat up 37% of our annual budget - \$6 billion dollars.

We have to make a change.

My recent executive order ramps up work requirements and vetting for Medicaid, SNAP and other federal welfare benefits.

But I need your help.

I'm calling on the Legislature to send a question to voters that would allow

adjustments to Medicaid expansion so that we protect the program for those who really need it, not those who should be working.

When I ran for office, I promised Oklahoma a \$2 billion savings account – no one believed we could do it.

The newspapers ran headlines challenging the idea.

Today, with your partnership, we've shattered records, holding the largest cash reserves in state history—over \$5.5 billion dollars at its peak.

Today, I call on this Legislature to create the Taxpayer Endowment Fund—seeding it with \$750 million dollars of existing savings.

Let's imagine what's possible - \$750 million invested today can turn into \$3.2 billion in just 20 years, generating sustainable revenue every year.

Proven sovereign wealth funds in red states like Wyoming, Alaska, and Texas are already doing this successfully.

Let's lock in these gains and let them grow for the future.

Last week, 1000 Oklahomans were born.

One of them is very special to me, my first grandson.

I know, I don't look old enough to be a grandpa.

These new Oklahomans are the reason we're all here.

President Trump is championing a pathway to secure the American Dream for the next generation.

Now, through the Trump Accounts, when a child turns 18, they have a launchpad to buy a home or start a business or to go to college.

And now, thanks to incredible private sector leadership, momentum is building nationwide.

Michael Dell, the founder and CEO of Dell Technologies, an American Dream story himself, has stepped up with a \$6.25 billion investment in those accounts.

Oklahoma is the epicenter of the American Dream, and we can and should invest in these accounts for every Oklahoma kid born this year.

If we RE-appropriate \$12 million dollars of existing funds, we can add \$250 dollars to every Oklahoma kid's account this year.

But let's not stop there. I invite our great Oklahoma businesses to be part of this movement.

I've already spoken to Williams and Continental who are looking at ways they can contribute and invest in the children of their employees.

Chad Zamarin, CEO of Williams is here with us today.

Thank you Chad for championing the next generation of Oklahomans and for everything you do for the oil & gas industry.

Together, we're not just talking about the American Dream, we're securing it for the next generation.

For the past seven years, as I've travelled around Oklahoma, I've learned what the American Dream means to us.

Oklahomans aren't waiting for the American Dream, they're building it for themselves.

It's the freedom to start a business or nonprofit. For others, it's the freedom to buy a home.

For nearly 250 years, the American Dream has been rooted in the promise of home ownership, a place to raise a family, build a future, and pass something on to the next generation.

Here in Oklahoma, that dream runs deep.

Our forefathers chased opportunity in the Land Run of 1889, staking claims on unassigned lands and building communities from the ground up.

This chamber sits on top of that history. We are the heirs of their American Dream. Like in 1889, Oklahoma is once again attracting new pioneers.

Because of our commitment to limited government and protecting the Oklahoma way of life, our state is the best in the country.

And for the third straight year, Oklahoma is top ten for people moving into our state.

We are headed in the right direction, and the world is taking notice.

More businesses, more people, more demand for housing... which means higher property values.

As our property values rise, so do property taxes. And too many Oklahomans – veterans, seniors, and young families – are feeling the pressure.

Many are concerned they're being priced out of the American Dream.

We owe Oklahomans real relief, not temporary fixes and election-cycle talking points.

We can't lose the momentum of this moment.

I'm calling for a state question that freezes property tax growth across the board. Send it to the people.

For some, the American dream might look like a home, but it starts with a strong education.

We know that when you're young, you learn to read, then as you get older, you read to learn.

No career pathway program, no workforce initiative, no intervention later in school can succeed if students cannot read well.

And too many of our students are not reading at grade level.

But let's be honest with ourselves. This challenge isn't new—and it isn't limited to early literacy.

Oklahoma's public schools have lagged in outcomes for some time, holding our state back.

It's not because our teachers are less dedicated.

It's not because our students are less capable.

And it's not because we haven't spent enough money.

It's because the system itself was flawed.

For decades, students were assigned to schools based solely on their zip code—meaning by where their parents could afford to buy a home.

Those schools were highly regulated, government-run, and built around a one-size-fits-all model.

Schools didn't need to compete.

That's how our system was.

So we injected competition into the system.

First we passed open transfer so kids could get out of a failing school district.

I want to shout out Norman public schools for accepting open transfer with open arms.

They've remained number one year after year for accepting new students into their district.

In the Blue Room of the Capitol, there's a group of Norman High students listening right now. As a graduate of Norman High School, thanks for being here guys! Go Tigers!

At the end of it all, a student can transfer to a new school, but if they want to excel in athletics, their opportunity may be blocked by an unelected and unaccountable High School sports association, the OSSAA.

Last year, we heard stories of students who followed the rules and did everything right to transfer schools.

And yet the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association (OSSAA) denied them the chance to play basketball at their new school. Their parents had to hire a lawyer and go to court just to get to play at their new school.

That is unacceptable.

Your ability to play sports shouldn't be contingent on your parent's ability to afford an attorney.

It's time to eliminate the OSSAA and secure our progress with open transfer.

Next, we expanded access to charter schools.

Our statewide charter board was a great reform, but we still let local school districts block new charters from opening.

You shouldn't have to get permission from McDonald's to open a Burger King across the street.

If we want top-tier charters to come to Oklahoma, they should be able to go straight to the statewide board for authorization instead of having to play "mother may I" with local school districts.

Finally, we passed the most impactful education reform in our history, The Parental Choice Tax Credit!

To finish the work on this achievement, it's time to make the program available to every Oklahoma family who wants it.

Let's eliminate the cap.

Let the money follow the student.

Put parents in charge.

Encourage competition and excellence.

This past year has been a turnaround year at the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

I'm proud to have appointed Lindel Fields, who is leading that effort.

He's brought a much-needed culture change to our state.

Oklahoma has always elected its State Superintendent.

Every four years, a new candidate runs for that office, promising parents a new solution—more programs, more money, more accountability, more flexibility. On and on.

Is the problem really that we haven't yet found the magic policy idea? Or is it that we have a politics problem?

Thirty-eight states appoint their superintendent rather than electing them.

It keeps the focus on outcomes instead of politics.

Leadership alignment matters.

That's why Oklahoma's next Governor should have the authority to appoint the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

I'm grateful to Speaker Hilbert and President Pro Tem Paxton for their leadership on this issue.

It's common sense.

Let's get it done this year.

As Governor, my top priority has always been keeping Oklahomans safe.

One of the greatest threats to public safety is the out-of-control marijuana industry. When Oklahomans voted to legalize medical marijuana in 2018, we were sold a bill of goods.

Out of state liberal activists preyed on the compassionate nature of Oklahomans.

Then, it opened up Pandora's box.

Now, we have more dispensaries than we do pharmacies.

Think about that...

These storefronts hide an industry that enables cartel activity, human trafficking, and foreign influence in our state.

Adria Berry at Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority and Donnie Anderson at

Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics have done incredible work to hold back the tide of illegal activity.

This industry is plagued by foreign criminal interests and bad actors, making it nearly impossible to rein in.

We can't put a band-aid on a broken bone.

Knowing what we know, it's time to let Oklahomans bring safety and sanity back to their neighborhoods.

Send the marijuana issue back to the vote of the people and shut it down.

As I've spent time reflecting, there is one great challenge that will remain.

To those of you in this chamber, and those yet to serve, I implore you to fight for One Oklahoma – for fairness, transparency and for state sovereignty.

I'm proud of Oklahoma's heritage - from the Native Americans who lived on this land and those who participated in the Land Run, to statehood.

We have an amazing history.

When Justice Gorsuch, in a 5-4 decision in July of 2020, decided that half of our state was a reservation, I became the first Governor who had to face this new challenge.

In the wake of the McGirt decision, I have worked tirelessly to hold the line to keep One Oklahoma and protect the rights of every Oklahoman.

We need to come together and protect the vision cast in 1907.

We need to stop any effort to federalize half of our state.

That's why it is so important that we elect men and women of integrity.
I want to make a few truths abundantly clear.

1) All laws should apply equally to all Oklahomans. No exceptions. An Indian named Kevin Stitt shouldn't be treated differently than a single mom of a different race.

2) If you commit a crime in Oklahoma, you should be prosecuted by a duly elected Oklahoma district attorney, you should be tried in an Oklahoma court overseen by a

duly elected Oklahoma judge, and you should be protected by the rights laid out in the Oklahoma constitution. Your race shouldn't call any of these factors into question.

3) If you live in Oklahoma, you drive on Oklahoma roads, you attend Oklahoma schools, and you vote in Oklahoma elections, you absolutely should not have different tax treatment than any other Oklahoman.

These things shouldn't be controversial.

I challenge Oklahomans to elect people who are committed to these values and protect these simple truths.

Game wardens shouldn't be afraid to ticket poachers.

District Attorneys shouldn't be afraid to prosecute criminals.

Local sheriffs shouldn't be afraid to enforce the law.

Many of us in this room have decried the DEI programs of the Biden administration, yet standby quietly when some say an Indian should be subject to a different set of laws.

We either believe in equal rights for all, or we don't, and it's time to choose. This issue will continue to split our state, both literally and figuratively, unless we address it head on.

It will be uncomfortable, and you're going to have to face down the state's largest political donors, but we must fight for One Oklahoma.

Every year, there are challenges to address and hurdles to clear, and we get to decide – are we going to meet the moment?

I enter this session with more optimism than ever.

So let's dream big.

We've proven to the world that Oklahoma is second to none – it's a state that promotes innovation, champions freedom, and creates opportunity for its people.

Oklahoma wasn't built by government planners or bureaucrats
Oklahoma was built by entrepreneurs, risk-takers and innovators who believe in

free markets and the American Dream – that if you work hard, take risks and create value, you should be rewarded.

There is so much more to come for our state.

Opportunities we couldn't even imagine 7 years ago are knocking on our door, asking to be a part of the turnaround here in Oklahoma.

Let's pursue the well-being of Oklahomans instead of our own self-interest. Ronald Reagan, prior to his political career, gave a speech called "A Time for Choosing."

I'll challenge you to go home and read that speech.

He concludes by saying, "You and I have a rendezvous with destiny. We'll preserve for our children this, the last best hope of man on earth, or we'll sentence them to take the last step into a thousand years of darkness."

He's reminding us that we have to teach our children that there is no such thing as equal outcomes, only opportunities.

The decisions we make in this building should not be made solely under the consideration of our next election or the leadership post we hope for next session.

They should not be made in pursuit of favor with a lobbyist or a special interest group – or a job when you're done with your term of service.

Every decision we make here must be in pursuit of the good of Oklahoma's future. The turnaround started here in 2019.

It's been an amazing journey.

It's up to us to preserve the American Dream for the next generation.

Our choices will take us to the next level or back to the struggles we've turned away from.

We have a rendezvous with destiny.

Let's grab it with the tenacity and grit that sets us apart as Oklahomans.

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

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