

The Real State of the State

- Elections
- Public Education
- Minimum Wage
- Corruption
- Felonies of legislators
- Fake surplus versus 31.9 million from Biden admin.
- Highest natural gas rate in the country
- Anti-LGBTQ+
- Less than 1/4th of Oklahomans voted for Stitt
- Stitt receive less votes than other statewide candidates
- Poverty
- ¼ of Oklahomans elected Stitt
- Public Safety
- Lack of mental health care
- Lack of addiction services
- Croynism
- Conflicts of interest
- Culture Wars
- Multiple outrageous utility rate increases
- Farmer subsidies
- Effort to stifle direct democracy efforts
- Still no mention of the 16,000 Oklahoma lives lost to COVID
- Continuing to attack Tribal Nations - one of our states economic engines vs embracing the diversity and uniqueness of our state.
- Lack of cultural diversity on state boards and commissions.
- Rs breaking rules that they made.
- Number of people moving to OK

REAL STATE OF THE STATE

Today Oklahoma's governor gave his 2023 State-of-the-State speech. Like most of the speeches he delivers, it was full of hyperbole and a great deal of self-congratulations. At times it was unclear who was speaking: Was it Kevin Stitt or George Santos?

Before we take an in-depth look at his remarks, I would like to point out that in his only gubernatorial debate last year, Stitt assured Oklahoman's that "being top ten is an aspirational goal, it's something we're never going to hit." That is a direct quote. If you listened to today's speech you saw him continue to try and bluff Oklahomans by claiming 7 times that Oklahoma is a top-10 state.

Stitt described today an Oklahoma far different from the place so many of us call home; a place of visions and loveliness that, for most Oklahomans, are both unrecognizable and largely unattainable. The bright, blue skies he describes are much like one might read in a children's book...if Oklahoma only funded schools so that our children could read at an appropriate grade level.

Which leads us to Stitt's ongoing attack on public education. He talks about funding students, not systems, yet his proposal is to fund private and church schools at the expense of properly funding our public schools. Today over 19 of every 20 Oklahomans between ages 5-18 are enrolled in public schools. Stitt offered zero appreciation for overworked and underpaid

teachers and didn't commit one additional dollar to public education.

He insisted that our greatest asset is our children. Yet he said kids in quote "failing schools" end quote, should go to another school. This, instead of funding and fixing public schools that are underperforming. His push toward privatization of Oklahoma schools will eventually wind up as disastrous as his attempt to privatize the handling of restaurants in state parks. Remember Swadley's? That's just the tip of what would happen to a private education system in Oklahoma.

He didn't stop with K-12 education, though. He insisted that Oklahomans should pay for education and not what he refers to as "indoctrination." This is the same type of boogeyman buzz word as "woke." He wants core, conservative values taught, but somehow doesn't consider that indoctrination. This thinking is impossible to follow.

Stitt insists that Oklahoma's colleges and universities should have less Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion officers and more career counselors. This stands in direct contrast to the number of universities throughout the country that are now offering degree programs and graduate certificates in DEI. This is a need that will continue to be present in the future, yet Stitt wants to delete it from Oklahoma education today.

Not surprisingly, Stitt refused to acknowledge in his speech the deep levels of corruption within his administration. There was, of course, no mention of the many millions of dollars he wasted on

COVID supplies that were never delivered. He didn't bring up the Swadley's scandal I mentioned a moment ago. He also ignored the many non-competitive contracts his administration has provided, and the cronyism that is rampant in our state's government. He opened his whole speech with a lie that he promised more transparency in government and delivered it to the people of Oklahoma. His administration has been so secretive in virtually every aspect that we can't believe any part of this assertion.

He also failed to address the two state representatives that have been charged with felonies, yet still remain able to propose and vote on legislation impacting the rest of us. This tells us that he has zero interest in rooting out harmful elected officials in Oklahoma.

His Santos-like statements also turned to Oklahoma's US military veterans. There are 340,000 veterans living in Oklahoma, that's 9% of our population. He says we are helping and supporting Oklahoma vets. All the while, the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Office of Veteran Affairs contends that the agency is operating outside the law. This is because of collusion with the governor and naming illegitimate commissioners to the agency. How in the world can Stitt say we are becoming the country's best state for veterans?

Another thing completely absent from Stitt's speech was the incredible income to the state through President Biden's Build Back Better and Infrastructure Investment plans. He claimed credit for the fact that 95% of Oklahomans will have high-speed

broadband by 2028, but ignored that that is funded through the federal government, no thanks to any of Oklahoma's Washington delegation.

He also bragged about how much Oklahoma funds law enforcement without telling the public how much of that was a direct benefit of the Biden administration and nothing from Stitt.

Stitt is only too happy to grab the money from the Feds, \$31.9 million from the Biden administration and counting, while at the same time badmouthing Washington and claiming to protect Oklahomans from federal overreach, especially in terms of guns.

Stitt also said he is protecting "our values" without every defining who the "our" really is. He blasted the nation's mandated vaccines—which we know saved millions of lives—and never mentioned the 16,000 Oklahomans who died under his own lack of pandemic leadership.

When it comes to energy, Stitt said that our energy grid is the envy of the world, while never explaining why Oklahoma's utility rates are among the very highest in the nation.

When he turned to talk of taxes, he crowed about his plan to eliminate state sales tax on groceries—the idea first brought about by Emily Virgin when she served as the Leader of the Democratic Minority.

While I could go on, point-by-point, most of his speech was simply more of the same self-agrandizing we have become used to by Stitt. I won't even address his talking about faith as it relates to his

own religion without respect to the faith traditions of other Oklahomans. Still, one thing cause my breath to catch and I must point it out here: He said Oklahoma was becoming the most pro-family state in the nation, where every member of the family is loved and supported. This is perhaps his boldest lie today.

Blocking life-affirming and life-saving medical care of young people does not support families. Eliminating a woman's right to decide with her doctor her own course of health care does not support families. Destroying public education does not support families. Oklahoma's median income of \$28,944 may support one person, but does not support a family. Eliminating rights, except, of course, for gun rights does not support families.

I love Oklahoma. This is the place I choose to live. It is my home. But I also choose to live in reality, not the fairytale Oklahoma where Stitt seems to reside. It is my obligation to point out what is wrong with this administration, especially when the governor refuses to tell us the truth. He says the state of the state is the strongest it has ever been. Governor, I respectfully disagree.

Stitt says we have brought the American Dream back to Oklahoma. That anything is possible in Oklahoma. We'll see. He concluded by saying God bless Oklahoma. Friends, that's the only real hope we have because we are not being blessed by this governor, his illusions, or his administration.

