

Oklahoma House of Representatives

2024 Session Highlights

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Introduction

The close of the 59th legislative session brought about some major accomplishments for the state of Oklahoma. One of the early achievements was the elimination of the 4.5 percent state portion of the grocery sales tax, which is expected to save Oklahoma taxpayers more than \$370 million each year. The Legislature made historic investments in funding public education and established a program to provide more than \$350 million to address deferred maintenance at state properties, state parks, and public colleges and universities. Public safety needs were also addressed by funding the completion of a new Department of Public Safety training facility, creating a classification system for felony offenses, and establishing criminal penalties for impermissible occupation when someone willfully enters and remains in the state without

having obtained legal authorization to enter the United States.

Agriculture and Rural Development

SB 1424 amends the Oklahoma Registered Poultry Feeding Operations Act by:

- Declaring that administrative violations are not the basis for criminal or civil action and provides protections to integrators, growers, operators, contractors, and applicators;
- Declaring that any alleged violation is not the basis for any private right of action;
- Declaring that a compliant nutrient management plan means that the operation is following best management practices, which insulates the grower, integrator, and applicator from any private right of action;
- Ensuring that civil action for damages is allowed after the State Board of Agriculture completes its enforcement action;
- Placing the responsibility for maintaining educational requirements on the operators and applicators;
- Requiring revisions to the nutrient management plan when runoff of poultry waste occurs at an application site;
- Increasing the fee charged to the owner or operator from \$200 per day to \$1,000 per day for violations of the act;
- Punishing the owner or operator for inaction that could lead to pollution of any stream, lake, river, or creek with a fee of \$500 to \$10,000 per violation;
- Increasing the upper limit of administrative penalties for owners or operators with late or incomplete paperwork from \$200 per day to \$10,000 per day;
- Allowing the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry (ODAFF) to assess a separate fee

of \$10,000 for owner or operator noncompliance that has led to water pollution;

- Ensuring that fees shall be used to enforce the act;
- Providing details about the notice ODAFF sends to the integrator when an operator is disregarding best management practices;
- Outlining the integrator's responsibility to ensure the grower becomes compliant and requires the integrator to suspend bird delivery or terminate the integrator-producer relationship, depending on the circumstances;
- Allowing ODAFF to issue a penalty fee to integrators for \$100 to \$10,000 for violating any aspect of integrator-operator notification process; and
- Clarifying that an employer-employee relationship does not exist between an integrator and contractor.

HB 3196 removes the maximum number of Oklahoma State University (OSU) veterinary students who can be accepted into the rural Oklahoma veterinary training program. Funding preference will be given to students currently enrolled in the OSU College of Veterinary Medicine and focused on large animals. The measure also increases the maximum amount of funds each student can receive per year from \$20,000 to \$25,000.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Controlled Substances

HB 1723 enables caterers who offer alcoholic beverage sales at the location of someone seeking an on-premises license to acquire a storage license. This license permits them to store alcoholic beverages bought at unlicensed sites during the duration of the written agreement. Furthermore, it allows the storage license to be transferred to the on-premises applicant once they are granted licensure.

HB 3352 grants exemption from the Oklahoma Tax Commission bond requirement to Oklahoma Alcoholic Beverage Laws Enforcement Commission license or permit holders who maintain 10 years of consistent tax payment compliance. This exemption is applicable to both existing and prospective license and permit holders meeting the eligibility criteria.

Additionally, the bill specifies that the bond exemption will be revoked if a license or permit holder becomes delinquent or noncompliant with tax payments, necessitating the provision of the original bond required by their license or permit.

Business and Commerce

HB 3595 directs the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) to establish an online jobs center for employers to post job openings. OESC may require

unemployment claimants to use the online platform to create an account, take a skills test, and add a resume.

HB 3158 requires the State Board of Cosmetology and Barbering to issue licenses to nonprofit schools within correctional facilities and modifies certain application procedures, including obtaining approval from the Department of Corrections. The schools may not charge tuition and must operate within designated areas. Inmates enrolled in these programs are considered low-income individuals and may receive fee waivers for licensure, certification, or renewal.

HB 3253 overhauls various definitions and requirements for architects, engineers, interior designers, and surveyors. The measure also authorizes the Board of Governors of the Licensed Architects, Landscape Architects, and Registered Commercial Interior Designers of Oklahoma to establish instructional programs for individuals currently licensed or seeking licensure as an architect or interior designer. The board may enter into agreements with educational organizations to facilitate courses in architecture, landscape architecture, or commercial interior design fields.

HB 3215 modifies continuing education requirements for electrical contractors, journeymen, and apprentices. Contractors and journeymen must complete 12 hours of continuing education every three years for license renewal. Apprentices must complete three hours of continuing education annually for registration renewal. Continuing education is not required for apprentices who are students or enrolled in an approved course. The measure also alters the qualifications for electrical licensing exams. A score of 70 percent or higher on each part of the exam is considered a passing score. Applicants must wait 30 days to retake the exam after each failure.

County and Municipal Government

SB 1854 prohibits any person from setting up unauthorized camps on state-owned lands. An *unauthorized camp* is defined in the measure as any tent, shelter, or bedding constructed for overnight sleeping on property not designated as a campsite. Violators are subject to a \$50 fine or up to 15 days in the county jail or both if convicted. A first offense will result in a warning and the arresting officer may not issue a citation unless the violator refuses assistance such as transportation to a shelter or food pantry, or other available indigent resources.

HB 4091 authorizes the Fire Marshal's Commission to arbitrate disagreements over fire protection service areas and to determine fire protection service area boundary lines. The Fire Marshal's Commission must consider response time, financial burden, and service capabilities when making a determination.

HB 3763 allows county officials and fire departments to post burn ban signs on Oklahoma Department of

Transportation (ODOT) and Oklahoma Turnpike Authority owned signposts. The locations of the burn ban signs are to be agreed upon by ODOT and the fire department or county. Installation, removal, and any associated costs are the responsibility of the county or fire department.

SB 1771 allows burn ban signs to be posted in rights-of-way by county commissioners or the board of directors of a fire protection district. The placement of such signs must be coordinated with ODOT. The entity that places the sign must remove it upon expiration of the burn ban.

SJR 16 sends a constitutional amendment to a vote of the people that, if approved, would create public infrastructure districts. Public infrastructure districts can incur indebtedness and issue bonds to pay for public improvements. A petition containing signatures from all of the property owners within the area must be filed with the municipality before a public infrastructure district can be created.

HB 1967 authorizes any county to levy up to 1 percent sales tax on goods and services in the county to fund emergency medical services with voter approval. Passage of the tax requires approval by a majority of the voters at a special election called by a resolution of the board of county commissioners. Any revenue derived from the sales tax will be apportioned in the same manner as the ad valorem collections for ambulance service districts. Monies received by an ambulance service district will also be subject to an audit by the State Auditor. Counties will also be required to enter into an agreement with any emergency service provider receiving funds and must verify the provider's licensure and standing with the State Department of Health.

Criminal Justice

SB 2039 creates the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services Revolving Fund within the Office of the Attorney General. The Attorney General is to expend monies from the fund to provide statewide access to a stable system of delivery of services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, promote a coordinated community approach to serving victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and provide access to services through dedicated support of underserved population programs. Any entity receiving monies from the fund must have full certification as a domestic violence and sexual assault victim service agency, be a nonprofit, and be subject to an annual audit. The first 5 percent of monies from the fund are to go to qualified entities serving underserved populations. Additionally, \$200,000 is for each qualified entity operating a shelter program and \$150,000 is for each qualified entity operating a crisis intervention center. Grants are to be proportionally reduced if grants awarded exceed the monies in the fund. The measure splits the fund into two accounts. One account is to

receive 30 percent; the remainder is to be deposited in the other account. Monies in the 30 percent account are to be expended in counties with a population of 600,000 or greater. Monies from the other account are to be expended in counties with a population of less than 600,000. The general appropriations bill, **SB 1125**, directs \$17 million to the fund.

SB 1835 creates the Oklahoma Survivors' Act to require the court to consider as a mitigating factor a person's history of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse prior to sentencing. The defendant must provide documentary evidence corroborating that the defendant was a victim of domestic violence at the time the offense was committed. Additionally, the defendant must provide a court record, presentence report, social services record, hospital record, or a sworn statement from a person who is not the defendant. Other evidence outlined in the measure may also be provided to corroborate the abuse. If the court determines that the defendant was the victim of domestic abuse or the subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological abuse at the time the offense was committed, the court is to depart from the applicable sentence ranges outlined in the measure. This departure cannot be applied to an offense that requires the defendant to register as a sex offender, offenses relating to child abuse, or offenses resulting in the defendant receiving the death penalty. Persons who were previously convicted of an offense may have a hearing to determine if the provisions of the Oklahoma Survivors' Act are applicable to their convictions. Offenders previously convicted of a crime who qualify for the reduced sentencing must submit a request for resentencing. Applicants must provide similar documentary evidence as outlined previously in the measure.

SB 1933 creates the 17-member Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence (SAFE) Board within the Office of the Attorney General with the powers and duties to:

- Examine the process for gathering and analyzing sexual assault forensic evidence kits;
- Develop a plan for the prioritization and acceptance of untested kits;
- Identify procedures for testing anonymous kits;
- Identifying improvements for victim access to evidence other than kits, including police reports and other physical evidence;
- Identifying additional rights of victims concerning the kit testing process;
- Identifying and pursuing grants and other funding sources to address untested kits, reduce testing wait times, provide victim notification, and improve efficiencies in the kit testing process; and
- Develop a training plan for equipping and enhancing the work of law enforcement, prosecutors, victim

advocates, sexual assault nurse examiners, and sexual assault response teams in all jurisdictions in the state.

The measure directs the board to:

- Promulgate rules regarding the collection of sexual assault forensic evidence and maintain related statistical information;
- Establish procedures for obtaining initial information regarding the collection of sexual assault forensic evidence from medical and law enforcement entities;
- Review the practices and procedures of medical and law enforcement systems; and
- Request and obtain a copy of all records and reports pertaining to sexual assault forensic evidence and submit an annual statistical report.

In an effort to address the rape kits backlog, the general appropriation bill, **SB 1125**, provides \$1.5 million to the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation.

SB 1211 increases the punishment for assault and battery by strangulation or attempted strangulation against an intimate partner or household member from a maximum of three years to a maximum of 10 years in prison.

HB 3752 allows the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board to request and obtain records of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections (DOC). The measure adds an additional member to the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board by including a designee of DOC who has a minimum of five years of experience in corrections and is currently assigned to the Community Outreach, Programs, or Population Units of the Department.

HB 1792 places Oklahoma's over 2,000 felonies into 14 different categories based on the severity of the crime. Furthermore, it aligns sentence ranges with current practices based on data derived from judicial sentencing orders, rather than actual time served. The measure sets standard sentencing ranges and minimum time served requirements for Class C and D felonies, with the severity of these sentences increasing after repeat offenses.

SB 1994 provides for the removal of unlawful occupants of property. The measure authorizes property owners to request the sheriff of a county in which the property is located to immediately remove a person or persons unlawfully occupying real property if certain conditions are met. The sheriff must serve a notice to immediately vacate on all unlawful occupants of the property prior to their removal. The measure authorizes the sheriff to arrest any person found on the property for trespass, outstanding warrants, or any other legal cause. Any person wrongfully removed may bring a civil cause of action. Additionally, the measure creates a felony for unlawfully occupying a property and causing intentional damages greater than \$1,000. The measure establishes

a maximum term of imprisonment at three years and/or a maximum fine of \$10,000. Any person who presents a false document purporting to be a valid lease agreement or deed is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in the county jail, a fine of not more than \$1,000, or both.

SB 1877 modifies the period of time for which a prosecutor may aggregate crimes of larceny. The measure lengthens from 90 days to 180 days in which the value of the goods involved in the larceny may be aggregated to determine the total value for purposes of determining the appropriate punishment.

SB 11 allows an incarcerated individual who is within five years of being released to be eligible for a state tuition aid grant.

Economic Development

SB 1447 creates the COMPETE Act, establishing two new divisions within the Oklahoma Department of Commerce: the Division on Economic Development, Growth, and Expansion (EDGE) and the Division on Community Outreach and Revitalization Enterprise (CORE). EDGE and CORE will collaborate to encourage economic stability in the state, improve the economic competitiveness of the state, and implement the strategic plan for the department. The primary duties for EDGE will be to serve as the state's lead economic development point of contact and the primary duties for CORE will be to focus on the long-term development of local communities to increase competitiveness and enhance economic opportunities.

Furthermore, the measure adds the Oklahoma Workforce Commission as a collaborator on the state's five-year economic development plan and requires the plan to include an economic development strategy that addresses target industries, site development, and workforce needs. Lastly, the measure creates the eight-member Legislative Evaluation and Development Committee to review financing for incentive packages that are greater than \$20 million.

HB 3959 expands the Oklahoma Quality Jobs Program to allow professional sports teams from the NFL, NBA, NHL, MLB, or MLS to receive quarterly rebate payments for up to 5 percent of the actual gross pay of sport-league jobs employed by the team for the duration of the team's existence in Oklahoma. Qualifying businesses must submit an application to the Oklahoma Department of Commerce and have at least \$10 million in new payrolls within one year. Rebate payments are capped at \$10 million per year per team and will be clawed back if the team does not stay in Oklahoma for more than three years. The Oklahoma Tax Commission is authorized to set aside income tax revenue to pay for the incentive payments, which will be placed in the newly created Oklahoma Five Major Sports League Rebate Payment Fund.

Education

HB 3278 modifies certain graduation requirements beginning in the 2025-26 school year. The new requirements include four units of math, which must include algebra I and algebra II or geometry, and six pathway units that align with each student's individual career and academic plan. District boards of education must also approve three additional elective units of any subject. A postsecondary-approved full-time CareerTech program or locally approved course may satisfy the required physical science or remaining math units.

SB 362 modifies various provisions of the newly renamed Strong Readers Act. The measure establishes the Statewide Literacy Revolving Fund to support teacher training programs in the science of reading. It prohibits schools from using the "three-cueing system" for reading instruction and requires the approval of reading screening instruments by the State Board of Education in consultation with relevant educational bodies.

Additionally, the measure mandates individual reading intervention plans for students showing deficiencies in reading, along with parental notification within 30 days of identifying the deficiencies. School districts are required to report reading proficiency skills and intervention outcomes to the State Department of Education, publish annual reports on district websites, and modify the procedure for remediating retained students. The measure also eliminates the intense reading instruction for kindergartners through third-graders who are exhibiting a reading deficiency, removes the good-cause exemption for students not demonstrating proficiency by the third grade, and introduces new requirements for teacher candidates and individuals seeking alternative placement teaching certificates for elementary education.

HB 3792 creates the Oklahoma Access and Achievement Program to provide scholarships to eligible students with intellectual disabilities studying in a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program (CTP). A student is eligible for the program if they graduated high school in the previous six years, have enrolled in a CTP program, and establish financial need. The program is an expansion of Oklahoma's Promise.

SB 1302 allows a student who was placed in the custody of the Department of Human Services at any time from eighth through 11th grade to enroll in Oklahoma's Promise.

HB 4073 requires public school districts to implement mobile panic alert systems from a State Board of Education-approved list. Every system should be capable of the following:

- Connecting emergency service technologies among first responder agencies;
- Transmitting 911 calls and mobile activations;

- Alerting school personnel when an emergency response is initiated on-site by a phone application, phone call, text message, or other technology;
- Providing emergency responders with floor plans and caller location; and
- Integrating school personnel with emergency responders to provide updates during an emergency.

HB 2158 requires students to complete a half unit of personal financial literacy coursework to graduate. The coursework may be integrated into an existing class or taught on its own in the 10th, 11th, or 12th grade. The coursework must include information about retirement planning, investing, online banking, and credit scores.

HB 3386 allows students to transfer twice per year to another school within the same district, except when the receiving school is full for that grade level. Districts must establish a policy for intra-district transfers, giving preferences to students within the school boundary, previous attendees, siblings of current students, children of district employees, and students who change residence within the boundary. Districts must also adopt a capacity policy for accepting transfer students with disabilities.

HB 3958 requires schools to include parents or guardians in any digital communication between a staff member and an individual student. School staff are not required to include parents on academic communications with students through school-approved platforms. Exceptions may also be made in cases of emergencies.

HB 1795 creates the Sergeant CJ Nelson Legacy Act. The measure provides a five-year exemption for room and board at any state college or university for children of police officers, emergency medical technicians, and firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

SB 358 expands the Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship to students enrolled in a school that exclusively serves homeless students.

SB 1786 allows a contract using the name, image, or likeness of an athlete to extend beyond the athlete's time at the postsecondary institution if the contract is between the athlete and the institution.

HB 3727 requires schools to provide cursive handwriting instruction for students in third through fifth grade.

HB 2190 authorizes a school district's board of education to establish a casualty and flood insurance recovery fund to purchase a high-deductible property insurance policy.

Elections and Ethics

HB 3156 prohibits the use of several types of voting systems, including ranked choice voting and instant runoff voting, in elections conducted in Oklahoma.

HB 1105 extends the timeframe to file a protest of constitutionality or objection to the Secretary of State's count of initiative petition signatures from 10 business days to 90 days.

SB 518 mandates that individuals endorsing a petition for ballot placement must use their legal names and grants the Secretary of State the authority to impose a filing fee of up to \$750 to fund the publication of notices about petition filings, which must be displayed on the Secretary's website. The measure also requires that notification of filings must be furnished to legislative leaders. Additionally, the measure extends the time frame for contesting a petition from 10 days to 20 days following its publication.

SB 1452 provides an income tax exemption to any employer that grants paid leave for their employees to work as a volunteer poll worker for a county election board. The exemption is equal to \$100 per day of paid leave granted.

Emergency Management

HB 2912 creates the State Assistance Dedicated for Disaster-impacted Local Economies Revolving Fund. The purpose of the fund is to provide advanced financial liquidity to governmental subdivisions directly impacted by a Federal Emergency Management Agency-declared (FEMA) emergency or disaster event. Governmental subdivisions must enter into a repayment agreement with the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management to be eligible. Governmental subdivisions are authorized to use these funds for infrastructure repair, temporary housing and shelter, to fund gaps in required matching funds necessary to participate in FEMA programs, and to mitigate revenue losses. A related measure, **HB 2913**, appropriates \$15 million to the State Emergency Fund and \$30 million to the State Assistance Dedicated for Disaster-impacted Local Economies Revolving Fund.

HB 3089 establishes the Strengthen Oklahoma Homes program to provide federally funded grants to construct or retrofit insurable properties to resist damage from tornadoes, windstorms, or hail. The grants are intended to achieve specific safety standards outlined by the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety. A residential property owner is eligible to apply for grants if they have insurable property, reside in an approved county, meet certain home conditions, and own an owner-occupied, single-family residence. Priority is given to low-income applicants and applicants who live in areas more prone to catastrophic weather.

Energy

SB 1505 expands the Oklahoma Emission Reduction Technology Rebate Program to include downstream oil and gas production, refining and distribution activities.

The current program offers a 25 percent rebate for the cost of implementing a qualified emissions reduction project. The measure also requires the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality to create an expenditure preapproval process for rebate applicants and creates a separate revolving fund for rebating downstream activities. The general appropriations bill, **SB 1125**, provides \$50 million in one-time funding for the program.

General Government

SB 1399 creates the Oklahoma Capital Assets Maintenance and Protection Fund and the 11-member Oklahoma Capital Assets Management and Protection (OCAMP) Board. The purpose of the board is to develop plans and direct the Oklahoma Capitol Improvement Authority on the utilization of the Oklahoma Capital Assets Maintenance and Protection Fund. The board is to develop three different five-year plans that outline how to maintain and repair state-owned properties and buildings for: public institutions of higher learning; state parks operated by the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department; and all other state-owned properties and buildings. A funding scale for each five-year plan is outlined in the measure.

Additionally, the measure provides that no fund are to be made in FY 25. For fiscal years 2026 through 2028, allocations from the fund are not to exceed \$75 million. Beginning FY 29 and every fiscal year after, \$50 million is to be apportioned to the fund.

The Oklahoma Capitol Improvement Authority must submit an annual report to the Governor and legislative leadership detailing the expenditures, deposits, and investment returns of the Oklahoma Capital Assets Maintenance and Protection Fund.

SB 1372 creates the Oklahoma Aircraft Engine Testing Development Grant Program and revolving fund. The program is to provide grants to private, public, or nonprofit entities to help expand the aircraft engine testing capabilities of the state and to develop the aircraft engine testing infrastructure. The revolving fund received \$16 million from the general appropriations bill, **SB 1125**.

HB 3623 requires all contractors or subcontractors that enter into a contract with a public employer to submit an affidavit to the State Purchasing Director attesting that they are in compliance with the Status Verification System, which verifies the citizenship status of all new employees. Contractors providing false affidavits are subject to administrative penalties of \$5,000 for the first offense, with subsequent offenses increasing by \$2,000 for each offense, and contract termination.

HB 1010 allows state agencies to purchase equipment and supplies, not to exceed \$2,500, from a local business if the agency is located in a county without a contracted vendor. Agencies do not have to get approval from the

State Purchasing Division for purchases, but are required to give the Central Purchasing Director a 72-hour notice before making the purchase. The measure requires agencies to maintain a file on each purchase, which is to include justifications for the purchase and any supporting documents.

Health Services and Long-Term Care

HB 3668 requires that prosecutions for sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult must begin within 12 years of discovering the crime. The measure includes all adult sexual abuse crimes and extends the statute of limitations for these offenses. It also expands the definition of racketeering to include Medicaid fraud and sets penalties based on the amount of fraudulent payments. Convicted individuals will face proportional fines, up to three years imprisonment, or both, and must cover investigation and litigation costs, with all collected funds deposited into the Attorney General's Medicaid Revolving Fund.

Insurance

HB 3190 creates the Ensuring Transparency in Prior Authorization Act, which establishes timeframes and policies for prior authorizations and requires health insurance companies to:

- Employ licensed medical professionals to make determinations that deny care;
- Modernize authorization systems;
- Publish prior authorization requirements online; and
- Honor prior authorizations for at least 45 days, or six months in the case of chronic conditions.

SB 1457 qualifies mental injury or illness sustained by a first responder as a compensable workplace injury. It provides compensation guidelines, including 70 percent of the average weekly wage, temporary pension benefits, and permanent disability benefits of up to \$50,000. The measure also requires employers to provide necessary treatment for up to one year for first responders diagnosed with PTSD, with a cap of \$10,000 on prescription medication expenses.

SB 1334 requires health benefit plans to cover expenses for standard fertility preservation services for individuals diagnosed with cancer and where necessary treatments may cause infertility. Preauthorization for these services is not required, but the plan may have limitations and cost-sharing mechanisms like deductibles or copayments. Religious employers can request exemptions based on their beliefs, but they must inform prospective enrollees of this exemption.

Judiciary

HB 2923 rejects the 17 percent across-the-board pay raise for state judges as recommended by the Board on Judicial Compensation. Instead, a 7 percent raise is approved by the Legislature for district, associate district, and special district judges effective July 1, 2024.

SB 1173 increases the number of special judges appointed in the Judicial District 14 (Tulsa and Pawnee counties) from three to five.

SB 473 creates a judicial office in Judicial District 7 (Oklahoma County) and Judicial District 14 (Tulsa and Pawnee counties). The method for selecting judges, salary, court staffing, and other procedures will be determined by the newly established 11-member Task Force for the Study of Business Courts. The task force will remain in effect until January 31, 2026, and membership to the task force will be determined by the Speaker, President Pro Tempore, Chief Justice, and Governor.

Military and Veterans Affairs

SB 1345 adds the United States Space Force as a uniformed service under the newly named Uniform Military and Overseas Voters Act.

SB 1707 establishes the state veterans home in Sallisaw. The Oklahoma Veterans Commission will determine the new location, which will replace the veterans home in Talihina. The measure also permits the proceeds from selling the veterans home in Talihina to be utilized for the operations of the new home in Sallisaw.

Pensions and Retirement

SB 102 increases the benefit multiplier, employee contribution rates, and employer contribution rates for members of the Oklahoma Police Pension Retirement System. The benefit multiplier is increased from 2.5 percent to 3 percent, whereas the employer and employee contribution rate is increased by 1 percent each to 14 percent and 9 percent, respectively.

- Current members under the 2.5 percent benefit structure may also retire with the increased 3 percent multiplier as long they meet a minimum waiting period and/or have a minimum number of credited service years.
- Members with at least 25 years of credited service must wait at least one year after the effective date of the act to retire with the 3 percent multiplier;
- Members with at least 20 years of credited service must wait at least two years after the effective date of the act to retire with the 3 percent multiplier;
- All other must wait at least five years after the effective date of the act to retire at 3 percent or opt

to retire at 2.5 percent without the five year waiting period.

HB 2687 requires new hires that are commissioned or CLEET-certified agents of the Attorney General's Office and Oklahoma Military Department to participate in the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Retirement System beginning July 1, 2024.

HB 1068 moves all deputy sheriffs and county jailers hired prior to November 1, 2020, to the hazardous duty plan administered by the Oklahoma Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) beginning November 1, 2024, and gives these employees until July 1, 2026, to elect to purchase service credit in the hazardous duty plan at actuarial cost. Former deputy sheriffs or county jailers rehired after November 1, 2024, will also have six months from the date of reemployment to make an election to purchase service credit in the hazardous duty plan at actuarial cost.

HB 1805 designates licensed emergency medical personnel hired on or after November 1, 2023, as hazardous duty members of OPERS. Qualifying emergency medical personnel includes emergency medical responders, technicians, and paramedics working for a participating OPERS employer. Hazardous duty members of OPERS receive increased retirement and pension benefits compared to non-hazardous duty employees and are subject the following contribution and benefit structure:

- The employee contribution rate is 8 percent of compensation, whereas the employer contribution rate is 16.5 percent;
- Members are eligible to receive full, unreduced retirement benefits after 20 years of service;
- Benefits are calculated using a 2.5 percent per year multiplier for the first 20 years of service and 2 percent per year multiplier for service in excess of 20 years.

Public Finance

SB 1125 is the general appropriations bill, providing for \$12.47 billion in spending for FY 2025. A detailed overview can be found on the budget portal linked [here](#).

\$345.5 million worth of capital projects were approved for self-financing through the Legacy Capital Financing Fund (LCF) this session, including:

HB 2891, which authorizes \$80 million to construct, refurbish, or expand facilities for chemistry, biosciences, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics degrees at the University of Oklahoma.

HB 2892, which authorizes \$80 million to construct, refurbish, or expand engineering facilities at the University of Oklahoma.

HB 2893, which authorizes \$80 million to construct, refurbish, or expand life science facilities at Oklahoma State University.

HB 2894, which authorizes \$30 million to construct or expand Oklahoma State University Medical Authority facilities.

HB 2895, which authorizes \$27.5 million to construct, refurbish, or expand the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigations headquarters and related facilities.

HB 2896, which authorizes \$74 million for the Department of Public Safety to construct a centralized training center and related facilities.

HB 4012, which authorizes \$4.3 million to build the State Capitol Arch, which will honor services performed by the Oklahoma National Guard.

HB 2915 authorizes the Oklahoma Capitol Improvement Authority to obligate \$500 million to ODOT to be used to maintain and improve certain highway and bridge projects. Those projects include the:

- Bridge on Highway 70 over Lake Texoma;
- U.S. Highway 81 realignment in Grady County; and
- Interstate 35 in Cleveland, McLain, Garvin, Murray, Carter, and Love counties.

Public Health

HB 1449 establishes the Women's Bill of Rights, defining terms such as, *father*, *mother*, *male*, *natural person*, and specifies that *sex* means biological sex at birth. It requires sex discrimination policies to ensure fair treatment of males and females. The measure allows distinctions between sexes if related to important government objectives, clarifies that equal does not mean identical, and permits political subdivisions, including schools, to include a person's sex in data collection.

SB 1675 extends the deadline for the Oklahoma Health Care Authority to implement capitated contract provisions from October 1, 2023, to April 1, 2024. It requires contracted entities to complete provider credentialing within 60 days of application receipt and respond to service requests for hospitalized members within 24 hours. Peer-to-peer conversations after adverse determinations must also occur within 24 hours. The measure limits post-payment audits to 3 percent of claims, includes downgraded claims in denial provisions, and extends minimum reimbursement rates from July 1, 2026, to July 1, 2027. Additionally, at least one statewide Medicaid contract must go to a provider-owned entity that meets proposal requirements.

HB 3449 establishes the University Hospitals Authority Behavioral Health Workforce Development Fund. The monies within this fund are allocated to implement a

pilot program at behavioral health facilities aimed at supporting behavioral health workforce development and facilitating access to behavioral health professionals.

SB 1709 transfers the Office of Client Advocacy within the Department of Human Services to the State Department of Health. The measure also transfers the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman within the Department of Human Services to the Office of the Attorney General.

HB 2330 repeals the Psychiatric and Chemical Dependency Facility Certificate of Need Act to address concerns surrounding the process of establishing psychiatric and chemical dependency facilities.

SB 1319 establishes the Public School Vision Screening Modernization Revolving Fund to provide grants for vision screening equipment, data collection, and related services in public schools. The measure allows electronic eye charts for in-school screenings, requires a cloud-based data management system, and directs the State Department of Education to share vision screening results with the State Department of Health.

Public Safety

HB 4156 creates the criminal act of impermissible occupation. Impermissible occupation occurs if the person is an alien and willfully and without permission enters and remains in the Oklahoma without having first obtained legal authorization to enter the United States. A conviction is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in the county jail for up to one year, a fine of not more than \$500 or both fine and imprisonment. A second or subsequent conviction is a felony, punishable by imprisonment for up to two years, a fine of up to \$1,000 or both fine and imprisonment. Any person convicted of impermissible occupation is required to leave the state within 72 hours following conviction or release from custody, whichever comes later. Any alien who has been denied admission, excluded, or removed, or has departed the United States while an order of removal is outstanding and then enters or attempts to enter or is found in Oklahoma is guilty of a felony. Law enforcement is required to collect all identifying information of persons arrested for impermissible occupation and cross-reference the information with relevant criminal databases. The Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation is authorized to maintain the collected information. It is an affirmative defense that the person has been granted lawful presence by the federal government or has been granted asylum by the federal government or the defendant was approved for benefits under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Persons convicted of impermissible occupation are also ineligible for probation, delayed sentencing, or participation in community sentencing. The measure declares a statewide preemption on legislation concerning

the presence of persons who enter and remain in the state without legal authorization.

HB 2914 creates the Oklahoma Sheriff's Office Funding Assistance Grant Program. The measure allows counties to submit an application for a grant to the Office of the Attorney General one time each fiscal year. Grant awards are \$150,000 to \$300,000, depending on qualifications. Counties awarded a grant are to limit the use of the grant proceeds to the lawful operation of the sheriff's office and may not be used for to pay a salary. The measure also requires the basic salary for sheriff may not be less than \$44,000 and no more than \$74,000.

HB 3639 modifies the crime of nonconsensual dissemination of private sexual images by removing the age qualifier that the image be of a person at least 18 years of age and who is identifiable in the image. The measure also removes the requirement that the image was disseminated with the intent to harass or intimidate the person. The measure modifies the penalty for nonconsensual dissemination of private sexual images if the person is attempting to gain any property or thing of value by increasing the amount of time to be served in prison to up to five years. The measure clarifies that these provisions do not prohibit the prosecution of a person for child pornography. Additionally, any person who disseminates three or more images within a six-month period is guilty of a felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

HB 3642 provides that any person who procures a minor for participation in child pornography or obscene material, or any person who possesses, viewed, accessed, shared, or streamed child pornography or obscene material is subject to prosecution. The measure clarifies the definition of *child pornography* and *obscene material*, and *visual depiction* to include computer-generated or altered images that appear to be a child engaged in obscene acts.

HB 3456 modifies definitions used to protect minors from the display of harmful material and provides legislative intent that statutes relating to the display of material harmful to minors be diligently enforced to protect minor children while also protecting the free speech rights of the public.

HB 3450 replaces the term *child prostitution* with the term *child sex trafficking* as used throughout the Oklahoma Statutes.

HB 3936 changes the term *child pornography* to the term *child sex abuse material* as used in the Oklahoma Statutes.

SB 1658 establishes a 20-year statute of limitations for the sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult. The measure provides that a person may be prosecuted at any time for child abuse, sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult, and child trafficking if the accused person has provided a confession

or admission related to the crime. The measure also eliminates language requiring prosecution to commence within three years from the date on which the identity of the suspect is established by DNA testing.

SB 1662 directs the director of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation to develop procedures to enable a qualified entity to request a state and national criminal history record check to determine whether a covered individual is the subject of any child abuse crime.

Revenue and Taxation

Oklahoma joined the majority of states that offer a sales tax exemption on groceries when the Legislature enacted **HB 1955**, which eliminates the 4.5 percent state sales tax on the retail sale of *food and food ingredients*. Any sales or excise tax levied by a local government on said items will be unaffected. The measure also directs the Oklahoma Tax Commission to promulgate rules to implement the act in accordance with the Streamline Sales and Use Tax Agreement.

A related measure, **SB 1283** adds a definition for *bottled water and food sold with eating utensils provided by the seller*, as it relates to the state sales tax exemption on groceries and food items. The measure also amends the definition of *prepared food* to clarify that food sold with eating utensils provided by the seller is taxable if it does not include a container or packaging used to transport the food. The definition of *prepared food* is further modified to exclude food sold by a food manufacturer, food sold in an unheated state by weight or volume as a single item, and food sold that ordinarily requires additional cooking by the consumer prior to consumption. The measure also eliminates the temporary moratorium on local sales tax increases on food and food ingredients that would have been in place until June 30, 2025.

HB 3388 makes numerous updates the Parental Choice Tax Credit (PCTC). The measure:

- Exempts payments received pursuant to the PCTC from being used to offset or pay delinquent tax liabilities, penalties, or interest or intercepted by any entity seeking to collect a debt, court fine, or court-ordered judgment;
- Exempts PCTC payments from taxable income effective tax year 2024;
- Clarifies that students that are expected to enroll in a private school are eligible for the credit;
- Amends the definition of *qualified expense* to exclude tuition and fees paid with a scholarship or any tuition and fees that are discounted by the school;
- Aligns the tax credit period with the fiscal year beginning FY 2026 and modifies the tax credit caps to align with the transition from tax year to fiscal year;
- Amends the income criteria to be based on the combined adjusted gross income of the parents or legal guardians of the student rather than the household income;
- Allows students that attend an accredited private school that exclusively serves homeless or financially disadvantaged students to receive the maximum \$7,500 credit amount or the cost to educate the student, whichever is less;
- Replaces the affidavit requirement with an enrollment verification form requirement that the Oklahoma Tax Commission (OTC) will use to determine the installment payment amounts;
- Allows taxpayers that are in receipt of income-based government benefits such as SNAP, TANF or Soonercare to bypass additional income verification requirements;
- Aligns the application process for the tax credit with the school year. The application period will open on February 15 of each preceding school year, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year;
- Prohibits the OTC from requiring any taxpayer that received the credit in the fall of 2024 to reapply in the spring of 2025 and requires the credit amount for spring of 2025 to be based on the amount issued for the fall of 2024;
- Grants priority consideration to applicants with an income of \$150,000 or less as long as the application is submitted within the first 60 days of the application period;
- Requires credits to be prorated by semester, paid in two installments;
- For student enrolled in the full school year, payments will be issued by August 30 and January 15;
- For students not enrolled in a full school year, payments will be issued within 30 days after the application is approved or during the first 30 days of the semester that student is enrolled in, whichever is later;
- Directs the OTC to prioritize taxpayers with students that received the credit in the prior year and are below the \$150,000 income qualifier if the number of applications exceed the allowed cap for the year;
- Requires taxpayers to provide notification to the OTC within 30 days of certain actions that would disqualify them from receiving the credit;
- Allows the OTC to reallocate unused credit to the next eligible taxpayer in line if they receive notice from a taxpayer that they cannot or will not be participating in the program for any reason;

- Requires the OTC to notify applicants of their approval status within 30 days of closure of the application window; and
- Requires the OTC publish monthly updates on its website regarding the number of credits claimed and students receiving funds.

State Powers

SB 404 updates the Oklahoma Religious Freedom Act by declaring that the act of excluding any person or entity from participation in or receipt of governmental funds, benefits, programs, or exemptions based solely on the religious character or affiliation of the person or entity will be considered a substantial burden.

Technology

HB 3594 establishes Title 75A in the Oklahoma Statutes to address laws and regulations related to technology. The measure defines numerous terms related to blockchain and digital asset mining and outlines a series of actions that the state and local governments are prohibited from doing to hinder or restrict the use of digital asset for purchases, commercial asset mining, home asset mining, staking, or operating nodes on a blockchain network. All actions and transactions by industries addressed in Title 75A may be subject to the jurisdiction of the Oklahoma Department of Securities.

HB 1600 provides a sales tax exemption for sales of machinery and equipment used for commercial mining of digital assets until December 31, 2029. The mining must occur in a qualified colocation facility that has a load reduction agreement with its retail electric supplier. Eligible equipment includes, but is not limited to, servers, computers, racks, power distribution units, cabling, switchgears, transformers, substations, software, network equipment, and electricity.

Wildlife

SB 941 modifies several hunting and fishing licensing fees for residents and nonresidents. The major fee modifications include:

- Raising the price for an annual resident fishing license from \$24 to \$30 and for an annual nonresident fishing license from \$54 to \$80. Both licenses are valid for one year from the date of issuance;
- Raising the price for an annual resident hunting license from \$24 to \$35 and for an annual nonresident hunting license from \$175 to \$208. Both licenses are valid for one year from the date of issuance; and
- Raising the price for an lifetime fishing license from \$200 to \$375 and for a lifetime combination hunting and fishing license from \$750 to \$1,024.

The measure also modifies certain provisions relating to the Wildlife Commission and hunting and fishing licenses. Those modifications include:

- Raising the age at which residents and nonresidents are exempt from having a fishing or hunting license from 16 to 18;
- Creating a five-year disability combination hunting/finishing license for \$20;
- Removing the five-year fishing, hunting, and combination licenses for residents and replacing it with a three-year combination hunting/fishing license for \$120;
- Removing the lifetime hunting licenses;
- Providing that certain licenses are required to hunt in a commercial hunt area;
- Requiring the Wildlife Commission to submit a report to the Legislature every five years with proposed licensing fees based on the latest Consumer Price Index; and
- Repealing [Title 29 Section 4-112](#), which relates to hunting licenses. This repealer addresses a duplicate sections issue.

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