

State of the State
Governor Dewey Bartlett
January 7, 1969

Mr. President

Mr. Speaker and
Members of the 32d Legislature:

When I appear before you in May, I jokingly said I was glad to see you go.

Let me say that I'm glad you're back. There is much to be done, and we must be about doing it.

I offer you my full cooperation and I know I will receive yours. I recognize we will on occasion disagree. I recognize, as I know you do, that disagreement frequently leads to agreement, agreement which results in constructive legislation.

Working together, we can continue to move Oklahoma forward.

Working together, this can and should be the shortest session in many years.

I am optimistic about the State of our State.

Our economy is growing rapidly.

Our industrial development progressed more in 1968 than in any previous year. 1969 should develop into an even greater year.

In 1968, industry invested an estimated \$148 million dollars in construction of new plants and expanded facilities and created 7,682 new jobs for Oklahomans.

For 1969, we already have announced an additional investment of \$135 million dollars in construction of new plants and expansions, creating 2,186 new jobs – and the year is only seven days old.

More and better jobs has been and will continue to be one of the primary goals of this administration.

Personal income in Oklahoma is up 11.1 per cent over a year ago, ranking our state 14th nationwide in gain of income.

Total employment within the state is up 21,000 over last year.

We are moving ahead. We are making progress. You will be asked to help further in this effort by enacting legislation which I consider essential to attract new industry and more and better jobs.

Much of our work in this area has been done by mobilizing Oklahoma's great sales force – its citizens.

They have responded to the call for help with enthusiasm and pride in our great state.

Using the "Okie" program – that's Oklahoma, key to industrial expansion: Oklahoma, key to intelligence and enterprise, and Oklahoma, key to individual enthusiasm – as a theme, we have lured former Okies back through the "bring back our Okies" program; we have asked our church congregations to "help an Okie," and we have attempted to involve every citizen in the building of Oklahoma.

Oklahoma industry, working with the help of our Full Employment Commission, and the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, has continued to open job opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed. A nationwide, experimental job training project, funded by the Ford Foundation, will test the merits of the Full Employment Commission's Loan Program to the disadvantaged.

We recognize the value of minority ownership and management of business enterprises. To facilitate minority involvement in private enterprise, we propose, within the framework of higher education in Oklahoma, the establishment of a National Center for the development of business management skills for members of minority races.

The State of the State, we know, is not dependent upon industry alone. I want now to report on other aspects of state government:

Through your Legislative Action and Executive Order many recommendations of the Management Study Committee have resulted in more efficient and economic state government, throughout state government there is a new sense of pride and accomplishment.

Tax collections in the first five months of this fiscal year have increased \$27.2 million dollars over the first five months of the last fiscal year. This indicates a strong economy as well as improved methods of collecting state taxes.

Highway deaths were cut dramatically in 1968. Oklahoma was second of the 50 states in traffic death toll improvement. This is a great accomplishment, one which we can attribute to our dedicated law enforcement officers. In addition, by enacting more traffic legislation than any other state, you laid the ground work for this achievement.

The people approved the \$99.8 million dollar building bond issue to provide added health, mental health, education, medical facilities and other state facilities. This was a great step forward, and I salute each of you for your efforts in securing passage.

The merit system has been extended to include the Board of Education, the Corporation Commission and the State Crime Bureau.

Through your efforts court reform has been accomplished.

Continued optimism about our state is reflected in my proposed budget, which is on your desks.

Which I acknowledge the assistance of many of you in its preparation, I want it clearly understood that the full responsibility for this budget rests on my shoulders, and I know that better than any of you.

Before discussing the budget, I wish to make certain observations regarding it.

I first recommend those increases made necessary by existing laws, such as the teacher pay raise, social security requirements, and others.

Next, I recommend an increase for each department sufficient to raise the salaries of all state employees to the minimum amount recommended by the merit system board. This complies with House Bill 1000 of the 1968 session.

I then recommend for most departments a minimum increase of five per cent to meet increased operational costs.

No increases are recommended for those departments which did not request one.

Believe it or not, the Will Rogers Memorial Commission actually requested a decrease. Needless to say, I followed this recommendation, and I wish to compliment its members.

Next, I recommend you create a supplemental appropriation reserve fund of \$2 million, the purpose of which is to assure cash funds being available to satisfy emergency needs when you convene in January, 1970. If you fail to establish this fund, you will have no cash funds for supplemental appropriations.

The remainder of the money is recommended for division between departments based on their respective needs.

I have not recommended any appropriation for Teacher Retirement in the budget. This is not an oversight. I can not intelligently recommend an appropriation to finance Teacher Retirement until such time as your study report is completed. We must, however, pass a sound Teacher Retirement program which we can finance. After I have

studied the report, I will have some recommendations to your leaders regarding the method we can use to finance Teacher Retirement.

I will summarize the budget:

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Last year you appropriated \$83.5 million for public schools. I propose an appropriation of \$93.8 million, an increase of \$10.3 million. In the last session, we raised the pay of teachers by \$500 per year which resulted in a statewide average increase of \$600 per year. This year, the law requires that teacher pay be raised by an additional \$400. An additional \$400 raise is provided next year.

I further propose an increase of approximately \$900,000 for vocational-technical education.

HIGHER EDUCATION

I propose an increase of \$5.7 million. As you know, our colleges and universities last year used much of their additional funds for faculty salary increases, resulting in an average increase of \$1,003. I again support a bill providing that Section 13 funds may be used for faculty salary increases and other educational expenses, rather than capital improvements alone.

HIGHWAYS

I propose an increase of \$5.5 million.

PUBLIC HEALTH

I propose an increase of \$700,000.

MENTAL HEALTH

I propose an increase of \$1.6 million.

OTHER RECOMMENDED LEGISLATION ELECTION REFORM

Free and honest elections are the cornerstones of our society. Even more importantly, the people must believe that their elections are being conducted fairly and impartially. With this in mind I recommend the adoption of several election reforms.

First, I ask that you enact legislation to completely reorganize state and county election boards, with a view toward removing them as far as possible from the political arena. Legislation designed to accomplish this purpose has been introduced by my floor leaders today.

Next, I recommend you enact legislation prohibiting straight party voting general elections throughout Oklahoma, in every county.

I urge you to submit to the people a proposal that the Governor and Lieutenant Governor be elected jointly.

Finally, I ask that you refer to the people the question of lowering the voting age from 21 to 19.

ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY

I recommend that you enact legislation abolishing the office of County Superintendent of Schools, and I further recommend that you place responsibility of that office with the State Board of Education.

I recommend, as I did in 1968, that you enact legislation to provide for the employment of an investment specialist for State Government.

I recommend, as I did in 1968, that Boards of County Commissioners be brought under the State Central Purchasing Act. I further recommend that the Central Purchasing Act be extended to allow cities and towns to benefit from its dollar-saving potential if they so desire.

I recommend that you approve a joint Resolution calling for the establishment of an interagency mailing service for the state government.

I ask that you withdraw Oklahoma from the Southern Regional Education Compact.

REORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

I ask that you increase the salaries of certain state officials.

I ask that you refer to the people the questions of abolishing the offices of Commissioner of Charities and Corrections, State Labor Commissioner and State Auditor.

I ask that you submit to the people a resolution calling for a constitutional convention to convene on the first Tuesday in September, 1971.

I suggest that you continue and expand the voting membership in the constitutional study commission with one-third of its members appointed by the legislature, one-third by our highest courts and one-third by the Governor so that the study of the entire constitution will be completed during the 1969 interim.

I support a realistic conflict-of-interest code for state officials.

I support constructive changes in laws relating to workmen's compensation.

I support legislation providing for sound planning for the development of the Arkansas River Navigation Project. I also support legislation for boat and water safety on our lakes and waterways.

I have outlined to you my proposed budget and program. I hope you will give it careful consideration and improve upon it wherever possible.

I look forward to considering your legislation and working with you so that we will continue to move Oklahoma forward.

I assure you of my continued cooperation as I seek yours.

Thank you.

About Digitizing the Governors' State of the State Addresses

Section 9, Article 6 of the Constitution of Oklahoma provides as follows:

“At every session of the Legislature, and immediately upon its organization, the Governor shall communicate by message, delivered to joint session of the two houses, upon the condition of the State; and shall recommend such matters to the Legislature as he shall judge expedient.”

From statehood in 1907 to present, the state of the state addresses of Oklahoma's Governors have been recorded in pamphlets, booklets, and Senate Journals. One could not foresee the toll that time would take on the earliest of these documents. When these items first arrived at the Oklahoma State Archives, the leather bindings had dried considerably, cracking the spines significantly. Due to the acidity in the paper, many pages have darkened with age. Some of the more brittle pamphlets crumble at the slightest touch.

Thus when we decided to digitize these materials, we faced two challenges: the safety of the original documents and ease of viewing/reading for patrons. Our primary objective was that the unique and historic qualities of the documents should be reflected in the website. However, older fonts would not digitize clearly when scanned and even using a flatbed scanner could cause the bindings to worsen. An image of each page would increase download time considerably and any hand-written remarks or crooked pages could be lost. We decided to retype each document with every period, comma, and misspelled word to maintain the integrity of the document while placing some unique images of the documents online. Patrons can download the addresses quicker and view them clearer as well as save, print, and zoom with the Adobe Acrobat Reader. We have learned much from our efforts and we hope that our patrons are better served in their research on the state of the state addresses of Oklahoma's Governors.