

State of the State
Governor Henry Bellmon
January 15, 1963

Upon motion of Senator Ham, the 1st Message of Governor Henry Bellmon delivered in Joint Session was ordered printed in the Journal, the Message being as follows:

Gentlemen, and Mrs. Tabor:

I congratulate you for your success in the recent elections. You have a right to be proud of the confidence which your constituents have placed in you.

Bob Barr, a former Legislator, who is well known to many of you, and respected by all who knew him, once gave me some sound advice. Bob's advice was that when you have a problem that needs to be settled, get together a group of honorable men with good minds, and give them all the facts. Keep away outside influences, and they will come up with the right answer. I believe that you are such a group, and I have absolute confidence in your ability to find the right answers for the problems we face.

You have one advantage which has not been enjoyed by some previous sessions. I suggest to the honorable members of the Legislature, that there has never been a time in the history of Oklahoma, when outside influences were weaker. Practically every pressure group that prowls the legislative halls went down in defeat November 6. Never has a legislative body had such a free hand to represent the citizens and write a program for the whole state, without regard for the selfish interests of the privileged few. The power blocks are in shambles. Let's keep them that way!

During my life, I have had contact with many groups of men and women, and in my judgment those who dedicate themselves to elective, governmental offices are most to be admired. You must make the most difficult decisions of any group in our society. Inevitably, you subject yourselves to sharp and frequently unfair criticisms from those who never have and never will answer a roll call, and yet you serve at a great financial sacrifice.

The great progress which has been made in the United States during the past 187 years, and the progress which has been made in Oklahoma during the 55 years of our statehood, can in large measure be attributed to our form of government and to the high caliber of the men and women who have devoted their time and their talents to this high calling. Again, I congratulate you, and look forward eagerly to our service together.

The outcome of the last election produced a historic condition: a Republican Governor and a Democratic Legislature.

As things stand today, relationships between the second and fourth floors are harmonious. Both have frequently expressed desires and determination of working

together, and both are sincere. However, let's face the facts: We are not going to agree on everything during these next several months, and some of these disagreements may become rather sharp.

Will Rogers once said that he never met a man he didn't like. I can't go as far as the Cowboy Philosopher, but one thing I can say: I have never met a man I couldn't work with, and I guarantee you that I will never allow disagreement over an issue or a course of action to become personal, or to reduce my respect for an individual.

We can disagree, but not disrupt the governmental processes. To me, it is a mark of immaturity for an individual to allow a difference of opinion to lessen his regard for another person. I also assure you I will never impugn your motives, either individually or collectively.

Government, perhaps more than any other field of human endeavor, rests solidly on the integrity of the individual, and the dependability of the spoken word. Progress is possible so long as faith in the individuals concerned remains unbroken. In this connection, I want to state publicly to you that I will never tell you a lie. There may be times when I can't tell you anything, but within human limitations, if I say it, that's the way it will be.

I am going to assume that members of the Legislature operate the same way, and on this basis of mutual trust and respect, our relationship will be on solid ground. This will make it easy for you to lie to me one time, but I assure you **one time** is all!

I believe it is entirely proper at this time for me, as a newly elected governor and a member of a minority party, to set forth a few ground rules which I propose to observe, and urge that you follow the same rules:

No. 1: As I have said, I will never lie to you. In my experience, no area of endeavor is so demanding of integrity as the field of government. As long as individuals can trust each other, progress is possible. However, once mutual faith and confidence are destroyed, constructive action becomes impossible. When you make a statement, I will take it at face value, and I ask you to give me the same consideration.

No. 2: I appreciate the recommendations and suggestions that you have made in the past, and may make in the future regarding individuals for appointment to responsible positions in this administration.

However, I want to ask you a favor: When you have a recommendation regarding a project or an appointment, please come to me alone, so that we can discuss it man to man. Frequently, awkward situations arise when an elected official attempts to discuss the problems in the presence of a third party.

Also, please do not embarrass me by making public your choice of appointments. The law provides that the Governor appoints and the Senate confirms, and until the law is

changed, that is the way it will be. Some of you will undoubtedly be Governor in the future, and I am sure you will want to make your own appointments. I expect to have and to use the same privilege.

No. 3: The election is over. Each of us was elected to serve the best interests of the citizens we represent, and we can best accomplish this task if we put aside partisan considerations, and make our decisions on the basis of what we believe to be best for all of Oklahoma. This I pledge to do. I urge you all to do the same.

No. 4: As I mentioned to the Senate caucus earlier, please do not become infuriated at rumors or at reports which you may get in the press. So far as I know, Oklahoma is blessed with one of the finest press corps in the country. However, it's curious how many times statements become garbled or misconstrued when they pass through the minds of others. To avoid misunderstandings, let's agree to discuss our differences personally before they are aired in the press.

I long ago learned that a person who is chicken-hearted has no business in government. Many of the duties which we are called upon to perform are extremely distasteful. Some nearly tear the heart out of a man. Yet unless these matters are treated promptly, the problems get bigger and bigger, until finally no reasonable solution is possible.

Many believe that Oklahoma's financial condition has reached the crisis stage. It is evident from the election returns that voters obviously believe that they are furnishing sufficient funds through our present tax structure for an adequate program of governmental services. They have turned down a proposal to raise taxes, and are looking to this administration and to this legislature to make fullest possible use of the funds which they place at our disposal. I believe it is significant that practically no member of the Legislature pushed for a tax increase.

The budget which you have before you, anticipates changes in our law which, in my judgment, will give us at least 30 millions of new dollars to use for highway, education and social welfare services, without raising taxes.

In my estimation, approval of these recommendations, and careful attention to all areas of government expenditures, will get Oklahoma on a sound financial basis, and avoid future financial crises.

I now want to discuss the budget with you.

Obviously, the proposals contained in this document will require careful examination, and the amendment and modification of our present laws.

These are my proposals.

They have been reached after careful study and consultation with authorities in many fields. I believe they represent sound thinking. They are based on a sincere desire to write a workable program for Oklahoma. Their passage will require courage and understanding. I pledge to you the full support of the administration toward the passage of this program.

Oklahoma is a great state with a proud tradition, colorful past and a brilliant future. We have only begun to fully utilize our ample human, agricultural, mineral climatic and water resources.

Looking ahead, we can see both opportunities and difficulties. These days are similar to earlier times which moved Josiah Holland to write:

“God give us men! A time like this demands strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands;

Men whom the lust for office does not kill;

Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;

Men who possess opinions and a will;

Men who have honor;

Men who will not lie;

Men who can stand before a demagogue and damn his treacherous flattery without winking!

Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog in public duty, and in private thinking.”

I believe the 29th Oklahoma Legislature is made up of such men, and I am proud to be associated with you.

In compliance with the Constitution and Laws of this State, I submit herewith for your consideration a Budget representing my estimate of expenditures to be made, and revenues to be received by the State of Oklahoma during the next biennium.

The total requests of all State Agencies for monies from the General Revenue Fund approximates \$365,000,000. We will have available for appropriation, according to the estimate of the Board of Equalization, the sum of approximately \$243,000,000.00 for the next biennium.

The Constitution of Oklahoma requires that the appropriations must be within the Estimate of Revenue made by the State Board of Equalization. Therefore, it was necessary in many instances to recommend an amount which was less than was

requested. In some instances it was necessary to recommend an increase to carry out the program currently required by statute.

Since the funds available for appropriation for the next fiscal biennium are estimated to be approximately \$4,000,000.00 less than was appropriated for the current biennium a detailed study was made. Careful consideration was given to each and every function of State Government. In order to meet the current and immediate future demands for money from all functions of State Government it is necessary to recommend a new approach for financing our State Government.

Legislation will be introduced within a short time creating a Commission of Social Welfare Services. This Commission will be composed of the Chairman of the Board of Public Affairs, the Director of the Department of Public Welfare, the Commissioner of Public Health, the Director of the Department of Mental Health and a Commissioner of Social Welfare Services appointed by the Governor. This Commission will be empowered to more fully utilize the personal, physical and financial resources of the Agencies affected, resulting in expanded services.

I shall briefly cover the recommendations for each of the major functions of government and more specifically in detail any major changes in individual agencies as they might affect the financial picture of our state budget.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Appropriated by 28th Legislature \$9,249,404.00	Amount Recommended \$10,030,098.00
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Much of the increase recommended for General Government is in the appropriation to the State Legislature. This is necessary because of the payment of weekly travel for the members and to avoid making a supplemental appropriation at the beginning of the next biennium. I have also recommended an increase in the appropriation to the State Budget Office to enable that office to set up Data Processing Equipment.

I am also recommending that the appropriation to Commerce and Industry be brought back to the amount appropriated the preceding biennium.

EDUCATION

Appropriated by 28th Legislature \$153,133,316.00	Amount Recommended \$166,910,032.00
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An increase of approximately 12% in the appropriation of Higher Education is recommended. With the increase fees established last year this will provide funds for

increased salaries and expenses of occupying new buildings built with funds from the recent bond issues.

The amount recommended for Common Schools is sufficient to set beginning salaries at \$4,200.00 and provide increases of \$100.00 per year for teachers with Graduate Degrees up to a maximum of \$5,900.00. This would make our salary schedule equal to and better than our neighboring states in the Southwest.

I also propose that the 10% reserve for delinquent taxes be cut to 5%. This would provide approximately \$2,500,000.00 for the biennium. I also propose that 75% of the Federal Impact Funds authorized by Public Law 874 be considered as chargeable income. This would provide funds of over \$10,000,000.00 for the biennium.

I am also recommending that there be no appropriation made for free textbooks and that a lease system be authorized similar to that now in use by other states.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Appropriated by 28th Legislature	Amount Recommended
\$4,557,550.00	\$1,787,550.00

The amount recommended for Public Health for the next biennium includes only the amount for the operation of the State Health Department. The funds for the operation of the two T. B. Hospitals and the General Hospital will be financed from funds available and appropriated to the Social Welfare Commission.

MENTAL HEALTH

Appropriated by 28th Legislature	Amount Recommended
\$21,225,060.00	\$180,000.00

This recommendation also includes only that amount necessary for the operation of the Department of Mental Health. The Mental Hospitals and the Mentally Retarded Schools would also be financed from funds available and appropriated to the Social Welfare Commission.

PUBLIC WELFARE

Appropriated by 28th Legislature	Amount Recommended
\$3,364,860.00	\$21,395,660.00

The amount recommended for the next biennium for this function is a sizeable increase over the last appropriations made. This is represented in the \$18,000,000.00 appropriation to the Social Welfare Commission. This increase will finance the operation

of all institutions now under the Mental Health Board, the Board of Health, the Board of Public Affairs, the Department of Public Welfare and the Deaf School at Sulpur and the Blind School at Muskogee. This would still permit an anticipated cost of living increase for senior citizens amounting to \$3.00 per month.

An appropriation of \$1,000,000.00 is recommended for the establishment of a retirement plan for State Employees.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND DEFENSE

Appropriated by 28th Legislature	Amount Recommended
\$12,031,830.00	\$7,686,000.00

The recommendations in this function of government is less for the next biennium because of the transfer of the financing of the State Penitentiary and State Reformatory to the Social Welfare Commission.

I am also recommending sufficient funds be appropriated to the Department of Public Safety for the expenses of the additional troopers authorized by law and added to the Highway Patrol last summer.

HIGHWAYS

Appropriated by 28th Legislature	Amount Recommended
\$19,508,169.89	\$15,000,000.00

I am recommending an appropriation of \$15,000,000.00 from the General Revenue Fund for Highways for the next two years. This amount, with the Dedicated Funds that are appropriated, will provide approximately \$84,000,000. In addition to this amount it is estimated that there will be approximately \$4,000,000.00 accrue to the Highway Construction Maintenance Fund from surplus gasoline tax collections, over and above the three year average. This means Oklahoma will have one of the largest highway programs in our history.

REGULATORY SERVICES

Appropriated by 28th Legislature	Amount Recommended
\$1,797,000.00	\$1,838,076.00

The small increase of funds recommended in this function is to enable various agencies to pay rent in the two new office buildings. I am recommending that there be no appropriation made from Dedicated Funds for the State Insurance Board and that it be combined with the Insurance Commissioners Office and that their appropriation from Dedicated Funds be increased to provide for an Insurance Rating Board in that office.

CONSERVATION

Appropriated by 28th Legislature
\$7,436,274.00

Amount Recommended
\$7,510,274.00

The small increase recommended here is to enable the Planning and Resources Board to pay rent for the office space in the new office building.

I am also recommending that Supplemental Appropriations be made as follows:

Common Schools.....	\$5,000,000.00
Higher Education.....	4,550,000.00
The State Legislature.....	600,000.00
Department of Public Safety.....	373,239.00
Insurance Board.....	39,402.00
Planning and Resources Board.....	26,202.00
Vocational Rehabilitation.....	10,238.00
Banking Department.....	6,311.00
Securities Commission.....	5,000.00

Not all of these amounts will come from the General Revenue Fund. The total from the General Revenue Fund will amount to \$9,970,990.00.

	Actual General Revenue Fund Appropriations Made by 28th	Recommended General Revenue Fund Appropriations to be made by 29th
Function of Government	Legislature	Legislature
General Government.....	\$9,249,404.00	\$10,030,098.00
Higher Education.....	55,477,500.00	67,037,276.00
Common Schools.....	89,600,000.00	96,000,000.00
Other Educational Functions.....	<u>8,055,816.00</u>	<u>3,872,756.00</u>
Total Education.....	\$153,133,316.00	\$166,910,032.00
Public Health.....	\$4,557,550.00	\$1,787,550.00
Mental Health.....	21,225,060.00	180,000.00
Public Welfare.....	3,364,860.00	21,395,660.00
Public Safety and Defense.....	12,031,830.00	7,686,000.00
Highways.....	19,508,169.89	15,000,000.00
Regulatory Services.....	1,797,000.00	1,838,076.00
Conservation.....	<u>7,436,274.00</u>	<u>7,510,274.00</u>
Sub Total.....	\$232,303,463.89	\$232,337,690.00
Emergency and Contingency Fund.....	250,000.00	500,000.00
Supplemental Appropriations.....	14,008,850.00	9,970,990.00
Capital Outlay Appropriations.....	1,111,738.80	
Cancelled Warrants.....	<u>158.22</u>	<u>333.00</u>
TOTAL.....	\$247,674,210.91	\$242,809,013.00

The program outlined in the Budget will permit Oklahoma to have a program of governmental services larger by \$30,000,000.00 without a tax increase. It will also permit the Legislature to provide an adequate program without resorting to deficit financing.

It is my desire to work with the people of this State by working with each and every member of the Legislature. I believe that by working together, that when this session closes, we will have developed a program of which the people will be proud and which will be beneficial to the State of Oklahoma.

Respectfully yours,
HENRY BELLMON,
Governor

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.