

PERSPECTIVE

February 24, 2023

OKFB supports HB 2775 and HB 1935 to increase school funding across the state

Oklahoma Farm Bureau is proud to support HB 2775 and HB 1935 by House Speaker Charles McCall to increase funding for public schools across the state of Oklahoma.

These proposals would assist public school funding in a number of ways, including providing a teacher pay raise and increasing each school's per-pupil funding through a \$500 million total funding increase. Additionally, up to

\$300 million would be allocated to tax credits for students attending private or home schools.

Rural Oklahoma is the lifeblood of our state, and Farm Bureau members know firsthand one of the keys to continued vibrance and prosperity in rural communities is the strength of our local school districts. We thank the legislature for creating a measure that would provide much-needed financial

resources for rural schools while supporting education across the state.

While the funding plan applies to all public-school students, the checks and balances the legislation puts into place will funnel a significant portion of the funds to rural school districts.

Members applaud the legislature for their recognition of this issue and urge a "yes" vote as HB 2775 and HB 1935 move through the legislative process.

Ways to stay updated with this legislative session:

Sign up for Action Alerts

Visit okfb.news/takeaction to sign up.

Join our weekly legislative Zoom call

Contact your field representative.

Schedule a county Capitol visit

Contact your field representative.

Watch Lincoln to Local episodes

Visit okfb.news/LincolnToLocal23.

OKFB joins coalition against recreational marijuana SQ 820

Oklahoma Farm Bureau has teamed up with a number of local and state organizations in a coalition opposing State Question 820, a measure to legalize the recreational use of marijuana in Oklahoma.

"Protect Our Kids – No on SQ 820" is chaired by former Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating and is comprised of organizations including the Oklahoma Sheriff's Association, The State Chamber, Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association and more.

With SQ 820 up for consideration in a special referendum vote on Tuesday, March 7, the coalition has begun actively encouraging a "no" vote on the state

question through press releases, social media and a town hall discussion with Channel 8 news in Tulsa.

OKFB's grassroots policy stands opposed to legalized recreational marijuana, reflecting the views of Farm Bureau members from across the state.

Farm Bureau members know firsthand the effects the marijuana industry has on rural Oklahoma, including placing strain on rural utility

providers and making common land management practices like herbicide application a greater challenge.

Members believe the legalization of recreational marijuana will only compound the problems the state has faced since the legalization of medical marijuana in 2018.

To learn more about the coalition, visit no820.org or find them on Facebook (@NoSQ820).

Vote "no" on SQ 820

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

Legislative update: education funding, nuisance ordinances, OSU Veterinary Medicine, county zoning



The second week of the 2023 legislative session carried with it the same momentum seen in week one. Once again, state lawmakers were hard at work as they continued committee meetings and hearing bills.

Highlighting the week was an education funding package authored by House Speaker Charles McCall. House Bills 2775 and 1935 would work together to increase public school funding by \$500 million and would allocate an additional \$300 million in potential tax credits for children in private or home schools.

If passed, the \$500 million for public schools would be broken down into three sectors. The first is a \$150 million increase to the existing school funding formula to provide a \$2,500 pay raise for Oklahoma teachers. The second would grant \$50 million to the Redbud Fund, which assists low-income school districts around the state.

The third sector would set aside \$300 million to increase each school's per-pupil funding amount, up to \$2 million per school district. The \$2 million cap allows a majority of the funding to go to Oklahoma's smaller, rural schools.

The additional \$300 million for students in private and home schools is part of the Oklahoma Parental Choice

Tax Credit Act and would potentially give families a \$5,000 tax credit per student attending private school and a \$2,500 credit per student participating in a homeschool program.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau strongly supports this education package as it was designed to assist rural school districts and provide a compromise in the ongoing school voucher debate. Both bills passed the Appropriations and Budget Committee and move to the House floor for consideration.

In addition to the education package, OKFB followed the progress of a number of other bills this week, including SB 689 by Sens. Jessica Garvin and Jack Stewart which would allow counties to create nuisance ordinances for odors emitted from meat processing facilities and marijuana growing operations. SB 689 was laid over in the Senate Business and Commerce Committee and was not heard this week.

The House Ag Committee heard HB 1008 by Rep. Rick West this week. The bill, known as the Right to Garden, would void local ordinances or regulations on vegetable gardens on residential properties. HB 1008 passed in committee with a vote of 11-2.

The House Ag Committee also voted unanimously to pass HB 2053 by Rep.

David Hardin which would protect agriculture water users from frivolous permit protests. Both HB 1008 and HB 2053 now move to be considered by the full House.

OKFB was pleased to see legislation advance this week proposing additional funding for the Oklahoma State University Veterinary Medicine program – a top priority for OKFB in 2023. Farm Bureau members hope the additional funding for the OSU vet school will help address the current shortage of large-animal veterinarians in the state.

As with nearly every legislative session, OKFB is keeping a close eye on multiple county zoning bills and legislation proposed to increase ad valorem taxes. Notable county zoning bills are still awaiting a committee hearing, and the primary ad valorem bill was laid over this week and was not heard in the House County and Municipal Government Committee. OKFB will continue to track these measures and maintain an active role in the conversation against the legislation.

For an update on weekly happenings at the Capitol and an outlook on what is ahead, be sure to tune in to OKFB's weekly public policy update each Friday at noon via Zoom.



Join us for the first episode of Lincoln to Local to catch up on the happenings at the state Capitol at okfb.news/LincolnToLocal.



Grady County Farm Bureau members hear from Rep. Dick Lowe about current legislation that could affect members.



Kingfisher and Grady County Farm Bureau members visit with Sen. Lonnie Paxton in the Senate chamber.



Kingfisher County Farm Bureau members Randall Newton and Tyler Streck hear from legislators about relevant bills.



Grady County Farm Bureau member Addison Standridge meets Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell while on her visit to the Capitol.

Grady and Kingfisher county members kick off county Farm Bureau State Capitol visits

Our county Farm Bureau Capitol visits are off to the races for the 2023 legislative session! Grady and Kingfisher County Farm Bureaus had the chance to visit with their legislators last week. To schedule a visit to the state Capitol, contact your field representative.

Stitt recognizes Farm Bureau Week



To celebrate Oklahoma's largest general farm organization, Gov. Kevin Stitt signed a proclamation declaring Feb. 20-24 Farm Bureau Week in Oklahoma. "Oklahoma Farm Bureau, the state's largest general farm organization, serves as a voice for Oklahoma agriculture," Stitt said in a video in honor of Farm Bureau Week. "They are dedicated to protecting our producers and preserving the Oklahoma way of life."

Upcoming events and reminders for OKFB members

YF&R High School Scholarship

Deadline: Feb. 24

Collegiate Farm Bureau Scholarship

Deadline: Feb. 24

Collegiate Day at the Capitol

Date: March 8

Washington, D.C., Summit

Date: March 27-31

Farm City Festival

Oklahoma City
Date: March 21

OYLA application

Deadline: April 1

Capitol Camp application

Deadline: April 1

YF&R Legislative Day

Deadline: March 28
Date: April 11

Ag Day at the Capitol

Date: April 11

Womens Leadership Committee Conference

POSTOAK Lodge, Tulsa
Deadline: March 10
Date: April 21-22

Census of Agriculture

Deadline extended to end of spring 2023

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OKFB Capitol Camp applications now available for high school juniors and seniors

Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Capitol Camp will bring together high school juniors and seniors from FFA and 4-H to learn about the Oklahoma legislative process and how a bill becomes a law. Capitol Camp is scheduled for June 27-28, 2023. The event will be held in Oklahoma City at the State Capitol.

Students will have the opportunity to write and discuss a piece of legislation about an issue important to them.

Students interested in attending the 2023 Capitol Camp should fill out the application on our website to be considered for the event. The application is due **April 1, 2023**.

Completing the application does not guarantee a spot to attend.

Applications will be reviewed and students will be notified of their selection status and receive further instructions within two weeks after the application deadline.

The application can be found on our website at: okfb.news/CapitolCamp.



“Agriculture is one of the most important things we can advocate for, if not the most important thing. Without agriculture, we do not eat.”

*-Ryne Crosthwait
2022 Oklahoma Youth Legislative Experience attendee*