

Senate Budget Brief

A Summary of Budget News and Actions

Senate Debuts Enhanced Transparency Efforts

The Senate Committee on Appropriations has debuted a website specifically for communications about the state budget and the activity of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

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Senate Begins 2014 Budget with Performance Hearings

Senate Appropriation Subcommittee Chairs have been asked to increase their scrutiny of fees charged to Oklahoma taxpayers and activities that are better performed in the private sector. These questions, along with assessing agency performance, will be the lead topics during the 2014 Budget Performance Hearings, which begin this month.

Several of the Subcommittee Chairs have already reached out to their House counterparts and have scheduled joint hearings to reduce duplication of effort and provide a more cooperative working relationship with the House of Representatives.

“Writing and passing a balanced budget is the most important job lawmakers have,” said Health and Human Services Chair, Kim David. “By working in a cooperative way with our House counterparts and conducting joint meetings when possible, we can create a more efficient process that will better help us prioritize resources on behalf of our citizens.”

Senate President Pro Tempore Brian Bingman and Appropriations Chairman Clark Jolley met with subcommittee leadership several times through the interim to discuss their desire for an increased scrutiny of agency activities and budgets.

Performance Hearing Schedule

Education	January 28, 29
General Govt/ Transportation	January TBA
Health/Human Services	January 22, 28, 31
Natural Resources	January 24
Public Safety & Judiciary	January 23, 24
Select Agencies	January TBA

New Year, New Site, New Efforts

By Senator Clark Jolley, Chairman

As Oklahoma's 54th Legislature begins the budgeting process, several reforms that I requested when I assumed the Chairmanship last winter have become public and are debuting this month. None of these reforms would have been possible without the support of Senate President Pro Tempore Brian Bingman and the excellent staff we have, especially Chief of Staff Randy Dowell, Committee Director Caroline Dennis and the leadership of our Information Technology staff, led by John Warren.



The purpose of these reforms are to (1) provide more information to the members of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the various subcommittees as they perform their work to make it easier for them to be effective, (2) provide the same information to members of the public so they can also have more easily available access to the documents their legislators have as we review budget and performance data for the numerous agencies within state government, (3) provide historical information and data so performance can better be tracked and assessed and (4) move the Senate more into the modern era of web-based communication and professionalize the way in which the Appropriations Committee does its work.

The first and largest of these reforms is the new Senate website for the Appropriations Committee. Appropriations is the first committee in the Senate to have a website dedicated specially to its work alone. The new site – appropriations.oksenate.gov – is now live and will contain budgetary data that is used to formulate performance reviews, budget briefs, agendas, bill summaries and any other information provided to the members generated by Senate staff.

Additionally, all of our sub-committee meetings are now broadcast on the web. All of our votes in Committee are going to be cast electronically and more readily available for scrutiny. Moving through the session, as we start implementation, I'm hopeful that bumps in the road will be few and that these services prove beneficial to a more open and better thought out budgeting process for Oklahoma.

That's a Really Big TV Screen...

As part of the modernization efforts undertaken by the Senate, TV monitors have been placed in all committee rooms to broadcast votes as they are taken. To fit the Appropriations Committee Room, a 90 inch TV was needed to be able to view the text adequately from the opposite side of the room. The previous monitor was relocated to another committee room as the new screen was hung in early January.

One of the additional benefits is reclaiming lost seating which was required by projectors.

Key Appropriations Personnel

Senator Clark Jolley
Appropriations Chairman

Senator Ron Justice
Appropriations Vice Chairman
Natural Resources Subcommittee Chair

Senator Jim Halligan
Education Subcommittee Chair

Senator Bryce Marlatt
General Government & Transportation Subcommittee Chair

Senator Kim David
Health & Human Services Subcommittee Chair

Senator Rob Johnson
Public Safety & Judiciary Subcommittee Chair

Senator Patrick Anderson
Select Agencies Subcommittee Chair

Randy Dowell, Chief of Staff/Fiscal Director

Anthony Sammons, Health & Human Services

Quinten Dilbeck, Natural Resources

Sean Wallace and Leigh Garrison, Education

Jose Salinas, Public Safety & Judiciary

Jason Deal, General Government & Transportation

Amy Dunaway, Select Agencies