

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 55th Legislature (2016)

3 HOUSE CONCURRENT
4 RESOLUTION 1019

By: Inman of the House

5 and

6 Sparks of the Senate

7
8
9 AS INTRODUCED

10 A Concurrent Resolution related to the state budget
11 and related matters; making legislative findings;
12 declaring disaster; calling upon voters for
13 participation in November General Election; and
14 directing distribution.

15 WHEREAS, the State of Oklahoma is facing a budget shortfall of
16 \$1.3 billion for fiscal year 2017 after two revenue failures since
17 the beginning of 2016, resulting in the inability of the state to
18 meet \$250 million of its financial obligations for the current
19 fiscal year; and

20 WHEREAS, compounding cuts in years of revenue growth with cuts
21 due to voluntary loss of revenue, all state services to taxpayers
22 have seen a decline in funding for the last decade and are at severe
23 risk of even greater cuts due to the irresponsible mismanagement of
24 state revenue; and

1 WHEREAS, the public education system of Oklahoma is now
2 responsible for educating over 692,670 students and has been cut
3 greater than any other school system in the nation, resulting in
4 22.8% less funding per student than in 2009. Our schools have lost
5 \$58 million since January, 2016, and over \$400 million since 2008.
6 Oklahoma now faces a teacher shortage of nearly 2,000 trained
7 professionals. Class sizes at all grade levels are increasing to as
8 much as thirty-six students. Summer enrichment programs and STEM
9 programs have been cut in every district. Fine arts, music, and
10 athletic funding has been cut so deeply that many children are no
11 longer able to participate, despite their talent. Administrative
12 staff, who ensure school compliance with state data and testing
13 mandates, have been furloughed and laid off. Transportation routes
14 have been cut, leaving many children without safe, reliable
15 transportation to and from school, ultimately leading to more
16 absenteeism and learning days lost at a time when the state drop-out
17 rates are higher and graduation rates are lower than in 2008.
18 Schools can no longer afford qualified substitutes. Schools like
19 D.D. Kirkland Elementary in Putnam City are to be closed and/or
20 restructured. Gage Public Schools have been annexed due to lack of
21 financial resources. Oklahoma City Public Schools have eliminated
22 208 teaching positions and 92 administrative positions. Bixby
23 Public Schools have shortened their school year by a week. Oktaha
24 Public Schools, and many other districts, have moved to a four-day

1 school week, costing the students 10 instructional days. Mid-Del
2 Public Schools have lost over \$3 million in budgeted funds for this
3 school year and are eliminating elementary athletics, gifted
4 education summer enrichment, and electives. Schools across the
5 state no longer have basic supplies like paper and pencils.
6 Teachers are paying for these basic needs out of their paychecks
7 which are now the lowest in the nation; and

8 WHEREAS, the building blocks of our workforce, Oklahoma's 13
9 Comprehensive and Regional Universities, 12 two-year colleges, and
10 29 technology center districts with 59 campuses, have been cut by
11 \$74 million in the last year alone, and the number of our citizens
12 with college degrees is below the national average. The burden of
13 higher tuition is now placed more on working families than ever
14 before. Cameron University has eliminated 32 positions. Redlands
15 Community College has eliminated its award winning equine program.
16 Seminole State College is eliminating scholarships. Northeastern
17 Oklahoma A&M College is considering a 10% tuition hike. Southeastern
18 Oklahoma State University has lost 54 full-time positions. Many
19 universities and colleges are considering eliminating degree and
20 certificate programs, forcing students to complete their coursework
21 out of state. Career Tech funding was cut last year by 3.5%, when
22 enrollment was highest and employers were lacking over 70,000
23 skilled workers. The system has been cut by a cumulative 14.35% in
24 recent years. The state mandates colleges and universities to have

1 enough cash reserved to pay for a month of expenses, in case of
2 emergencies, and this year 16 schools will not be able to meet that
3 requirement. Revenue failures have caused an additional \$3.8
4 million cut for the current fiscal year and recurring expenses are
5 being shifted to one-time building funds, stalling any necessary
6 building repairs; and

7 WHEREAS, Oklahoma ranks 46th nationally in overall health
8 outcomes, the Oklahoma State Department of Health has been cut by
9 more than 19% since 2009 and the Oklahoma Healthcare Authority has
10 announced a 25% reduction in reimbursements to hospitals, doctors,
11 and nurses that serve our most vulnerable populations leaving
12 Oklahomans more vulnerable to disease outbreak, long-term health
13 concerns, and lack of access to specialists, emergency care, and
14 primary care providers. The Oklahoma Healthcare Authority has
15 already cut reimbursements by \$110 million for the previous fiscal
16 year due to a decline of \$44 million in state funds, amounting to
17 reductions of \$520 million per year. Oklahoma ranks 49th in
18 physician to patient ratio at 1,250 patients per doctor, and 64 of
19 Oklahoma's 77 counties are designated as primary care Health
20 Professional Shortage Areas. Provider rate cuts will put 269
21 nursing facilities at risk of closure, adversely impacting the lives
22 of 16,800 seniors and their families. Hospitals in Sayre and
23 Frederick have closed, and 46 other rural hospitals are nearing
24 closure. Other hospitals, such as Grady Memorial in Chickasha, are

1 being forced to close or limit services such as surgical care,
2 obstetrics, mental health, and pediatric care. Sixty percent of the
3 babies born in Oklahoma will be at severe risk due to the distance
4 their mothers will have to travel to receive prenatal care. Seven
5 hundred families will lose access to a life-saving program to help
6 families learn skills necessary for child abuse prevention. Five to
7 seven counties will lose access to vaccines and other preventive
8 care when their local health departments close. Funding for
9 community health centers that provide health services to over
10 150,000 low-income, working families has stopped, leaving people
11 without treatment for contagious and preventable diseases; and

12 WHEREAS, Oklahoma has one of the highest rates of adults with
13 undiagnosed and untreated mental health disorders and one of the
14 lowest rates of financial support for treatment services, ranking
15 45th lowest in investment for the mental health of its citizens, the
16 Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services has been
17 cut \$22.8 million since January 1, 2016. Seventy-three thousand
18 Oklahomans will be met with reduced services, providers will see a
19 cut in their reimbursement rates, and contracted facilities will be
20 considered for reductions and closures. Oklahoma currently ranks
21 13th in the nation for suicides - 731 in 2014 - and double that rate
22 for veterans; without treatment providers being able to give people
23 the help they need, the suicide rate will increase. Three thousand
24 five hundred people are at risk of losing both inpatient and

1 outpatient services. Our state ranks 3rd in domestic violence.
2 Decreasing services through the Department of Mental Health will
3 cost Corrections 8 times more as more people with mental illness end
4 up in prison. Education and supervision services for new providers
5 and therapists seeking licensure has been cut by half a million
6 dollars, leading to a larger provider shortfall in the future.
7 Court-ordered services have experienced a shortage of providers,
8 leaving people in the legal system longer as they wait to complete
9 requirements. Diversionary programs are dependent on mental health
10 providers and will not be able to take new clients. Expansion of
11 drug courts, which stand to save the state thousands of dollars and
12 prevent increasing the use of incarceration to those with mental
13 illness, has been put on hold. Sixteen counties will not be able to
14 carry through with plans to utilize drug courts in the next year;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, nearly 14 out of every 1,000 children in the state is
17 in agency custody for reasons of abuse and neglect due to lack of
18 resources for families and caregivers. The Oklahoma Department of
19 Human Services works in conjunction with the Healthcare Authority,
20 Health Department, Office of Disability Concerns, Department of
21 Rehabilitative Services, and Department of Mental Health, and the
22 cuts to those agencies, along with the \$25 million cut to the
23 Department of Human Services since January 1, 2016, will have
24 detrimental effects on Oklahoma's children and families and the

1 elderly, blind, and disabled. The Department has already absorbed
2 \$45 million due to budget shortfalls in the past year. Benefits to
3 assist the aged, blind, and disabled that provide minimal help to
4 pay for in-home services, food, and utilities have been delayed,
5 despite their pressing needs for immediate assistance. The
6 assistance program will be reduced specifically for families with
7 children. The agency has reduced the staff needed to help people
8 apply for programs and assistance by 1,200 employees. Over 7,000
9 people with developmental disabilities waiting for in-home
10 assistance, therapy, and job training will have to wait longer,
11 while 1,500 children and families in need have already waited over 5
12 years. In addition, the Office of Disability Concerns has been cut
13 by 33% since 2009. One hundred thirty thousand people will receive
14 less assistance for utility bills, child care centers will not be
15 inspected as often, rising numbers of applications for emergency
16 food assistance will require the limited workforce to work longer
17 hours; and

18 WHEREAS, Oklahoma incarcerates people at twice the rate of the
19 national average, ranking 1st in the nation in female incarceration,
20 and considering the cuts to the Department of Mental Health,
21 Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Human
22 Services, and the Healthcare Authority significantly compound the
23 problem, the Department of Corrections budget has declined by 6%,
24 losing \$27.5 million this year alone, while state prisons are at

1 123% capacity. Oklahoma now has 4,000 more inmates and 500 fewer
2 Correctional Officers to supervise them than the Department did in
3 2000. Correctional Officers, many of whom receive poverty level
4 wages, often work double shifts with limited help, leaving them and
5 the community at risk. Seventy-five per cent of female inmates and
6 53% of male inmates will risk not receiving much needed mental
7 health treatment before they are released. Programs aimed at
8 transitioning inmates into the workforce, helping inmates access
9 education, and preventive mental health therapies have all been cut,
10 leaving those not receiving services at greater risk of recidivism.
11 Group therapies have been cut by 50%, with the number of
12 participants also cut to 50%. Crisis interventions have increased
13 to 1,200 per month. The Office of Juvenile Affairs, an agency that
14 should have the tools to prevent at-risk youth from becoming future
15 inmates, has lost 12% of their revenue since 2009. The state's only
16 female juvenile detention center has closed. Two state-funded
17 alternatives to juvenile detention, home-bound and attendant care,
18 have been eliminated. Reduced services for juvenile offenders lead
19 to increased costs to Corrections; and

20 WHEREAS, public safety is one of the top priorities of our
21 state, protecting our citizens and enforcing our laws, Oklahoma
22 crime rates are higher than the national average in per capita
23 violent crimes, ranking 5th nationally in deaths due to fire, and
24 11th in highway deaths due to traffic accidents. The Oklahoma

1 Department of Public Safety, the State Fire Marshal, and the
2 Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation have all seen steep budget
3 reductions since 2009, greatly limiting the services they are able
4 to provide to Oklahoma citizens. The Fire Marshal's Office alone
5 has weathered cuts of more than 25% in the last 7 years. The
6 Department of Public Safety will not be able to hire staff to keep
7 up with demand in driver license services and compliance and the
8 Department will not be offering Patrol School to train new Troopers
9 in 2017. Oklahoma has the lowest number of Troopers assisting
10 Oklahomans today than in the previous two decades, despite the
11 increase in need; and

12 WHEREAS, the state has made significant progress over the last 8
13 years in restoring some of the nation's most structurally neglected
14 bridges and highways, \$60 million in budget cuts to the Department
15 of Transportation, on top of the \$60 million cut last year to county
16 roads and bridges, will completely undo our investment and put the
17 safety of every Oklahoman at risk. Funds for long-term projects
18 have already been decreased by \$30 million since January 1, 2016, at
19 a time when funding increases are needed just to maintain the
20 highways in their current condition. Reductions will leave less in
21 the budget, and a smaller workforce, to respond to road hazards and
22 weather emergencies this winter. Deferral of routine maintenance of
23 roads and bridges translates into more severe and more costly
24 surface damage and pothole repair. Poorly maintained roads and

1 bridges cost Oklahoma drivers \$4.9 billion a year in vehicle
2 maintenance, crashes, and delays. Our transportation system cannot
3 be the economic driver of our state with \$11 billion in backlogged
4 projects and rapidly declining funding; and

5 WHEREAS, Oklahoma's economy depends on its natural environment
6 which is protected, maintained, and administered through the
7 Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Agriculture,
8 Water Resources Board, and Department of Tourism, among others.
9 Each agency plays an essential part in the state's long-term
10 economic stability, the viability of our land and water to support a
11 growing population, and preserving the state's natural heritage.
12 Tourism is the 3rd largest industry in the state, and the Department
13 of Tourism has been cut by half since 2009. Our state parks,
14 important economic drivers in rural Oklahoma, including Dripping
15 Springs near Okmulgee, Okmulgee State Park, Little Blue, Snowdale,
16 and Spring River near Grand Lake, Walnut Creek on Keystone Lake,
17 Heavener Runestone, and seven other state parks have either been
18 sold, closed, or transferred, leaving less than 5% of the land in
19 Oklahoma open for public enjoyment without entry fees. Oklahoma
20 ranks 38th in air and water quality, hazardous waste, energy use,
21 and environmental policies. The Department of Agriculture alone has
22 seen cuts of 28%, leaving many Oklahomans without adequate
23 protection from wildfires, limiting services for food safety, and
24 many family farms without market resources. Family farms in

1 Oklahoma net just \$4 per acre in income, well below the national
2 average of \$68 per acre in income; ranking Oklahoma 47th in the
3 nation. The Department of Environmental Quality, with more than a
4 30% budget reduction since 2009, has a backlog of consent orders on
5 101 public water systems and 132 municipal wastewater systems that
6 are out of compliance with water quality standards, and fewer staff
7 to help mitigate the problems small communities across the state
8 face in supplying drinking water to their residents; and

9 WHEREAS, citizens across the state are at risk of losing their
10 single most important investment, their homes, to damage from
11 earthquakes. Oklahoma has seen a drastic increase in earthquakes
12 over the past several years with little to no response from the
13 state. Despite public outcry over the 1,971 magnitude 3.0,
14 65 magnitude 4.0, and two magnitude 5.0 earthquakes since 2009, and
15 a 50% annual increase in earthquakes since 2011, state leadership
16 has made little effort to curtail activities causing the seismic
17 activity and protect Oklahoma property owners. Oklahomans are now
18 carrying the weight of millions of dollars in damage, insurance
19 coverage, and legal costs in order to restore and protect their
20 economic futures.

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
22 OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 55TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE, THE SENATE
23 CONCURRING THEREIN:

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1 THAT the Legislature of the State of Oklahoma does hereby issue
2 a disaster declaration for the State of Oklahoma due to leadership
3 failure and urge the Legislature and the Governor to act immediately
4 to secure assistance in safeguarding services for our most
5 vulnerable populations.

6 THAT the people of Oklahoma recognize that the future of the
7 state depends on their civic engagement which they can exercise by
8 running for office to protect the things they hold dear: free and
9 equal education, good jobs, and well-funded safety and security.

10 THAT the Legislature encourages all eligible voters to cast
11 their vote in the upcoming General Election this November to elect a
12 new leadership that will rebuild our state's once solid foundation.

13 THAT copies of this Concurrent Resolution be distributed to the
14 Governor, the Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives, and
15 the President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate.

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