



OKLAHOMA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE, INC.
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From the Desk of the Executive Director

This Legislative Session will go down as one of the most memorable in recent history. Legislators have often said that the years where there is money to fight over are often worse than the years they have to cut budgets certainly played out this year. A stalemate over education funding brought this Session almost to a standstill during what is normally an extremely busy time. A round of vetoes from Governor Stitt only added to the tense atmosphere and left watchers to wonder if they were ever going to come to any kind of an agreement.

Further breaking from normal conventions, a mediator was brought in to help negotiate the budget between the Governor, Senate, and the House. They were able to come to an agreement on education funding and education tax credits. But, when lawmakers realized that they were not going to have time to send a budget to Governor Stitt and be able to override any vetoes, they called themselves into a concurrent Special Session to address the budget. At the end of the day, they were able to come together to craft a budget that the Governor let become law absent his signature. He vetoed two bills dealing with Tribal Compacts and the House has returned to Special Session to override the House Bill, but they are waiting for the Senate to return to override the Senate Bill, so we aren't done with Special Session just yet.

Despite the noise surrounding this Legislative Session, OML had a very successful year passing our priority legislation and stopping other bills that would have been detrimental to municipal government. We were able to pass legislation that will help get people into drug deferral programs and the drug court system. We were able to roll back a youth tobacco preemption bill that will address municipal enforcement and enact a mandatory certification program for municipal judges. We also passed a bill that will create a process to prevent municipal liens from being removed from nuisance properties that will go up for auction. We were able to defeat legislation that would have changed the municipal election process and stopped a bill that would have discriminated against financial institutions that would have negatively impacted municipal budgets.

We will continue our efforts to communicate effectively with legislators, mayors, city managers, councilmembers, clerk-treasurers, and all other municipal officials to ensure continued success. It is important to stay in contact with your local legislators during the interim and continue to communicate the municipal message. We will be rolling out advisory councils that will help our members become better engaged with their State Legislators. Our success comes from our members having relationships with their members and being able to share our message with their elected leaders.

Together, we provide a strong voice for Oklahoma municipalities. Our success is due to the fact that we are able to speak with a united collective municipal voice. We appreciate all of your efforts that went into making this a successful legislative session.

Sincerely,

Mike Fina, Executive Director