

# Understanding Legislative Language in Oklahoma



## A LEGISLATIVE BILL-WRITING GUIDE FOR ADVOCATES

Compliments of the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy  
[oica.org](http://oica.org)

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INSTITUTE  
FOR **CHILD**  
ADVOCACY

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**First edition prepared by members of the Oklahoma  
Intercollegiate Legislature (OIL)**

[www.okoil.org](http://www.okoil.org)

**2022 updates prepared by:**

**Joe Dorman, CEO**

**Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy**

**2915 N. Classen Boulevard, Suite 320**

**Oklahoma City, OK 73106**

**(405) 236-5437**

[www.oica.org](http://www.oica.org)



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## **A LEGISLATIVE BILL-WRITING GUIDE FOR ADVOCATES**

This packet has been prepared to help you understand the bill writing process and what necessary components make up the outline for a piece of legislation. Before anyone reads or suggests a piece of legislation, this document should be in an advocate's hands. Every bill and resolution that is filed by a lawmaker, written by a legislative staff employed by the Oklahoma Senate or House of Representatives, and introduced for the upcoming session will be uniform in appearance and will contain every necessary part in the correct order to make the bill or resolution legal according to state law. If you have an idea that would make a great law for Oklahoma, please feel free to contact your own state senator and/or state representative, or a lawmaker who shares your passion about the topic in question.

Special thanks go to the Oklahoma Intercollegiate Legislature (OIL) for allowing OICA to adapt their bill writing packet for use of advocates in Oklahoma. For more information about OIL, the nation's longest running mock legislature for college students, go to [www.okoil.org](http://www.okoil.org)



## **THE FIRST STEPS**

### **A. Where do I find a good idea?**

The first step to researching and writing a good piece of legislation is finding an idea that is both fresh and creative, along with filling a void that exists in current state law. If you have any doubts, simply ask your own state senator and/or representative, or another lawmaker who might be aligned with supporting the idea you suggest. Through your own work or personal experiences, you will likely be able to point to a problem which exists because of current laws, or a gap in the laws.

### **B. How do I develop my idea?**

Once you have your idea it is important to research the idea using current sources. Always remember that state laws are ever changing with the state legislature meeting for four months each year and more than two thousand different ideas submitted by the 149 lawmakers. By researching your idea, you will develop a thorough knowledge of the issue which will assist you during session when discussing your legislation before committees and the legislative bodies. When working with a lawmaker, supporting information enables the author of a piece of legislation to educate other members on the idea they are presenting, which helps lead to less debate and questions on the issue at hand. Some examples of supporting information would be facts, figures, and personal stories of how the issue impacts Oklahomans. The legislative idea worksheet (pg. 3) will assist in the development of your topic.

### **C. Where does my topic fit into state law?**

Once you have a general idea of what you would like to accomplish with your idea for legislation, it is time to refer to the list of Oklahoma Statute Titles (pg 8). Printed versions of the Oklahoma State Statutes, which include all of the laws of Oklahoma, will be available in most university or law libraries and on a number of state government internet sites (pg 5). You can search either a printed index or an Internet search of all statutes. Titles are divided into sections of law grouped by subject, such as *Schools* or *Criminal Procedure*. After you have found the correct Title, you may then search for the specific section that would be most relevant to your change. This depends on whether you are creating new law or amending or repealing a current law.

### **D. How do I write my idea for legislation?**

The last, and by far the easiest, step is writing each individual piece of legislation as a draft for legislative staff and the potential legislative author. The rest of this packet will explain in detail each part of a bill and resolution. Just keep in mind that your idea will likely be re-written by the professional staff to ensure it fits in with the rest of the laws currently adopted in Oklahoma. What you will do is simply imitate the appearance of the sample legislation (pgs. 10-14) with your suggestions to give them a good starting place for their work at the Oklahoma State Capitol. Don't be intimidated of writing legislation, but also understand bill drafting is a professional craft that sometimes even attorneys will not understand all the necessary components to ensure the idea will hold up to a court challenge or not create conflict with other parts of the law.

## **LEGISLATIVE IDEA WORKSHEET**

A. Describe the problem you are wishing to correct:

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B. How would you correct this problem?

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C. How can the problem best be corrected at the state level?

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D. What state governmental agency, branch, or group, would be responsible for implementation or oversight of your plan?

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E. Are there specific standards you think should be implemented? Licensing? Testing? Training? Accountability?

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F. How would you enforce your plan? Fines? Penalties?

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## READING AND UNDERSTANDING AN OKLAHOMA BILL

1	STATE OF OKLAHOMA	
2	1st Session of the 58th Legislature (2021)	
3	HOUSE BILL 1774	By: Conley
4		
5		
6	<u>AS INTRODUCED</u>	
7	An Act relating to children; creating the Office of	
8	Trauma-Informed Care; providing duties and	
9	responsibilities; providing for codification; and	
10	providing an effective date.	
11		
12	BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:	
13	SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified	
14	in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 650 of Title 10, unless there is	
15	created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:	

### **Components of a Bill**

**Heading:** Each bill will indicate the number for the Legislature, the session and the year in which the measure was introduced. The line following will include “House/Senate Bill/Resolution/Concurrent Resolution/Joint Resolution No. #####” and then on the right side “By: Last Name(s) (body). \* The number of the legislation will be added by the legislative staff at the time of officially filing the bill.

State of Oklahoma	
___ Session of the ___ Legislature (20__)	
HOUSE BILL NO. 1001	By: Smith of the House

\*—Co-authors can be added or removed during committees or regular session through the legislative body’s proper procedure.

**Title:** Every measure **MUST** have a title. Every act must embrace only one subject. Examples are: “An Act Relating to Criminal Procedure” or “An Act Relating to Public Safety”. The language at the front of the title is deliberately general but must include all matters in a measure. Frequently, but not always, subjects are determined by the statutory title into which the bill’s provisions would fall.

The title next gives a description of the contents of the bill, but the title is not written to be a summary of the bill. It is more like a table of contents (The general rule is that if it is in the bill it is in the Title). Drafters write titles with very general language, i.e. “requiring the notification of victims in certain circumstances.” The title does not tell the reader what circumstances. The title does, however, provide

vital information such as sections being repealed, amended, or created and whether an effective date or emergency clause is added. (The example following includes examples of creating new law, repealing existing law, and amending existing law—it's usually best to do one of these types of things in a single piece of legislation, not all three.)

### **AS INTRODUCED**

An Act relating to the State Capitol Building; establishing future renovations; repealing 73 O.S. 2021, Sections 11, 12, and 13, relating to repairs; amending 73 O.S. 2021, Section 10, relating to renovations; providing codification; and providing an effective date.

**Enacting Clause:** The state constitution requires the phrase at the beginning of all bills: “BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:”; this phrase follows the title.

**Body of the Bill:** (see Section IV for further specific sections/language) The body contains the substance of the act and is divided into sections. Each section that affects a statute is labeled in capital letters by its function, i.e., AMENDATORY, NEW LAW, or REPEALER and again gives the citation for the statute affected. Not all sections may affect a statute.

Oklahoma legislative measures amending sections of Oklahoma law include the entire text of the section. By legislative rule, all bills and resolutions calling for legislative action to amend any provisions of existing law must indicate the nature of the amendment by underlining new material and striking through provisions to be eliminated. For sections labeled “NEW LAW,” there is no underlining or strikeout because those entire sections are new law.

**Line Numbers:** Note that each line is printed on a numbered line. The purpose of the lines is to make it easy for members to identify the location of language under discussion and to locate amendments. For example, a member referring the body to page 1, lines 17-18 would direct all parties quickly to the same part of a bill. If a bill or resolution is over a page in length, line numbers are started over on each page, and page numbers are required.

### **Oklahoma Statutes**

The Oklahoma Statutes and amendments contained in the supplements thereto are the statutory law of the state. A list of the titles by which the statutes are arranged is included later in this document. Titles are organized alphabetically. With enactment of legislation on an annual basis, a yearly supplement is published consisting of cumulative changes, additions, and deletions to the law. The statutes and supplements are subject-indexed for easier use.

Some websites that will be helpful in researching current Oklahoma statutes are:

<http://www.okhouse.gov> (*Oklahoma House of Representatives Site*)

<http://www.oksenate.gov> (*Oklahoma State Senate Site*)

<http://oklegal.onenet.net/> (*Oklahoma Public Legal Research System site*)

<http://www.oscn.net/> (*Supreme Court's site*)

### Verbiage to watch for in legislation

There are often key phrases to look for in legislation that will impact the intent of the legislation. One in particular, “when funds are available,” indicates that the statutory change will only go into effect when a separate funding mechanism is passed by lawmakers. These are often included in legislation going through the appropriations process, but there is no guarantee. Review the fiscal impact report which will accompany a bill through the process to determine the cost of legislation as anticipated by the legislative staff and ask questions on if the funding will be available.

### Additional Important Notes

When writing numbers, figures, or dollar amounts into law, you must always spell out the amount and then put the numeral figure next to the spelled out amount in parentheses. The purpose of this is to prevent mistakes in copying the law into statutes after passed and approved. The following is an example:

- A. The Board shall consist of five (5) members, and
- B. They shall be paid one hundred dollars (\$100.00) annually for their services.

The typical font to use would be Times New Roman or a comparable font. The best font size for readability is 12 pt. but in some cases, it is better to use a smaller font, especially if your idea for legislation is exceptionally long (three pages or more) to cut down on pages. Notice that the last example of this packet (pg 14) is in a smaller font in order to fit the entire piece of legislation on one page. This practice can be used to eliminate a few stray lines on the second or last page of your legislation. So, if possible, adjust the font and font size to cut those stray lines down to a single page.

The staff for both the House and Senate use a standard outline to create a new section of law. Here is an example with naming conventions:

- A. [subsection]
  - 1. [paragraph]
  - 2.
    - a. [subparagraph]
    - b.
      - (1) [division]
      - (2)
        - (a) [subdivision]
        - (b)
          - (i) [clause]
          - (ii)
          - (iii)

### Effective Date or Emergency Clause

All bills passed by the legislature must have an effective date. The standard is for ninety (90) days following passage and approval by the Governor. If the author chooses a time greater than ninety (90) days, then the same language is used, replacing ninety (90) days with the chosen amount of time. If a bill is required to be enacted in less time, an emergency clause is required. This requires a vote of a two-third's (2/3) majority for the emergency clause. If the emergency clause fails, but the bill still passes, the standard ninety (90) days is used. You may use only one or the other. The following wording should make up the final section of your bill (these are not, for the most part, used in resolutions):



Section #: This act shall become effective (90) days after passage and approval.

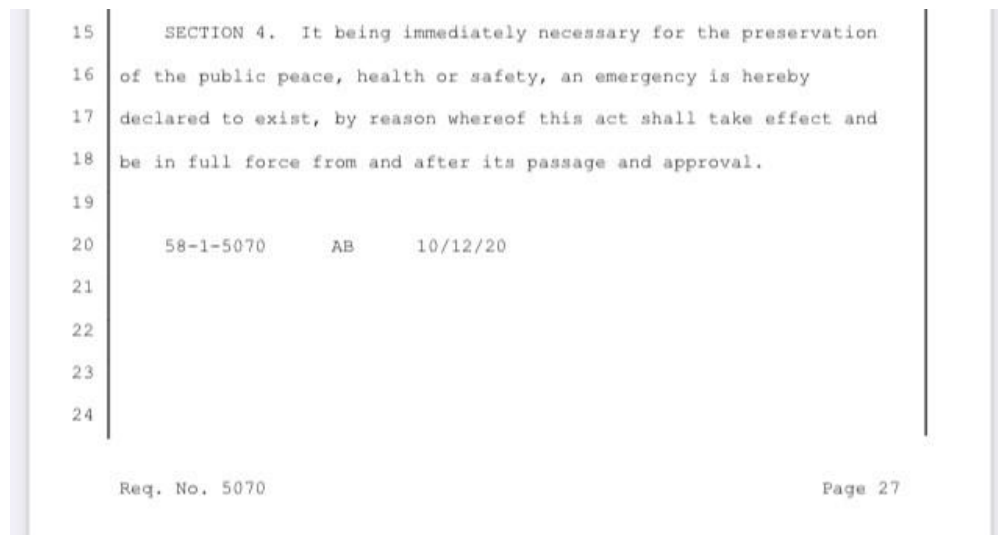
OR

Section #: It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

### Short Title

There is a significant difference in the **Title** and the **Short Title**. The title is spelled out in the header of the legislation and is required in a bill or a resolution. It serves as a table of contents for a piece of legislation as explained earlier. The short title is generally the first section of a bill that will give a nickname to a piece of legislation, and should be easily stated and remembered. **The short title is optional.**

Section 1: This act shall be known as the “Truth in Sentencing Act of 20\_\_.”



### Whereas Clauses, Resolve Clauses, and Sections

Bills do not contain “WHEREAS” clauses. The only type of legislation that contains “WHEREAS” clauses is a resolution. Bills contain sections. The *only* type of resolution that contains sections is a joint resolution that provides for a constitutional amendment.

WHEREAS, children are the future of Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, we should do better in all aspects of our lives to support the children of Oklahoma.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
\_\_ SESSION OF THE \_\_ OKLAHOMA LEGISLTURE:

THAT, we recognize that every day should be a special day for the children of Oklahoma.

## Severability Clause

Do **NOT** include this within your legislation. This clause **WAS** required sections within acts of the state legislature several years ago, but Oklahoma State statutory changes have eliminated the need for these clauses within bills.

## Codification

Though there is not a separate section in the body of the bill for codification, it should be included in the Title of any bill that creates new law and is a phrase that shall be worded “providing codification.” It comes immediately preceding “and providing an effective date” or “and declaring an emergency” in the title. The codification is actually included in the sections of NEW LAW to read:

Section #.      NEW LAW      A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section ### of Title ##, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

This wording is repeated before each new section of law in a bill.

## Ballot Titles for Constitutional Amendments

Ballot titles for Constitutional amendments are written in Joint Resolutions. This is the only time that sections are used in resolutions. Please see example included for format (pg 14).

## Title for a Resolution

After summing up the purpose of the resolution (i.e. “A Concurrent Resolution calling for more people to eat fresh fruits and vegetables;”), there should be a title portion for each “THEREFORE” clause (i.e. “providing support for local agricultural producers.”) Piecing that together would look like the following:

A concurrent resolution calling for more people to eat fresh fruits and vegetables; providing support for local agricultural producers.

## Definitions

Some legislators deal with matters that require definitions specific to their legislation. In such instances, a section can be included for definitions. This is a section in itself, and should be included in the title of a bill as “providing definitions;”. This section is also included within the statutes, so a provision must be made in the codification of a bill. The section itself should look like:

Section ##: The following terms are to be defined as follows for the purposes of this act:

A. Intelligent: Having an above the average score on the Intelligence Quotient examination.

B. Stupid: Not being able to walk and chew gum at the same time (Note: Not a true definition).

## **List of Titles of the Oklahoma Statutes**

<b>Title 1. Abstracting</b> <i>(See 74, State Government)</i>	<b>Title 28. Fees</b>	<b>Title 61. Public Buildings and Public Works</b>
<b>Title 2. Agriculture</b>	<b>Title 29. Game and Fish</b>	<b>Title 62. Public Finance</b>
<b>Title 3. Aircraft and Airports.</b>	<b>Title 30. Guardian and Ward</b>	<b>Title 63. Public Health and Safety</b>
<b>Title 3A. Amusements and Sports</b>	<b>Title 31. Homestead and Exemptions</b>	<b>Title 64. Public Lands</b>
<b>Title 4. Animals</b>	<b>Title 32. Husband and Wife</b> <i>(See 43, Marriage and Family)</i>	<b>Title 65. Public Libraries</b>
<b>Title 5. Attorneys and State Bar</b>	<b>Title 33. Inebriates</b> <i>(See 63, Public Health and Safety)</i>	<b>Title 66. Railroads</b>
<b>Title 6. Banks and Trust Companies</b>	<b>Title 34. Initiative and Referendum</b>	<b>Title 67. Records</b>
<b>Title 7. Blind Persons</b>	<b>Title 36. Insurance</b>	<b>Title 68. Revenue and Taxation</b>
<b>Title 8. Cemeteries</b>	<b>Title 37. Intoxicating Liquors</b>	<b>Title 69. Roads Bridges and Ferries</b>
<b>Title 9. Census</b> <i>(See 14, Congressional and Legislative Districts)</i>	<b>Title 37A. Alcoholic Beverage</b>	<b>Title 70. Schools</b>
<b>Title 10. Children</b>	<b>Title 38. Jurors</b>	<b>Title 71. Securities</b>
<b>Title 10A. Children and Juvenile Code</b>	<b>Title 39. Justices and Constables</b> <i>(See 12, Civil Procedure and 22, Criminal Procedure)</i>	<b>Title 72. Soldiers and Sailors</b>
<b>Title 11. Cities and Towns</b>	<b>Title 40. Labor</b>	<b>Title 73. State Capital and Capitol Building</b>
<b>Title 12. Civil Procedure</b>	<b>Title 41. Landlord and Tenant</b>	<b>Title 74. State Government</b>
<b>Title 12A. Commercial Code</b>	<b>Title 42. Liens</b>	<b>Title 74E. Ethics Rules</b>
<b>Title 13. Common Carriers</b>	<b>Title 43. Marriage and Family</b>	<b>Title 75. Statutes and Reports</b>
<b>Title 14. Congressional and Legislative Districts</b>	<b>Title 43A. Mental Health</b>	<b>Title 76. Torts</b>
<b>Title 14A. Consumer Credit Code</b>	<b>Title 44. Militia</b>	<b>Title 78. Trademarks and Labels</b>
<b>Title 15. Contracts</b>	<b>Title 45. Mines and Mining</b>	<b>Title 79. Trusts and Pools</b>
<b>Title 16. Conveyances</b>	<b>Title 46. Mortgages</b>	<b>Title 80. United States</b>
<b>Title 17. Corporation Commission</b>	<b>Title 47. Motor Vehicles</b>	<b>Title 82. Waters and Water Rights</b>
<b>Title 18. Corporations</b>	<b>Title 49. Notaries Public</b>	<b>Title 83. Weights and Measures</b>
<b>Title 19. Counties and County Officers</b>	<b>Title 50. Nuisances</b>	<b>Title 84. Wills and Succession</b>
<b>Title 20. Courts</b>	<b>Title 51. Officers</b>	<b>Title 85. Workers' Compensation</b>
<b>Title 21. Crimes and Punishments</b>	<b>Title 52. Oil and Gas</b>	<b>Title 85A. Administrative Workers' Compensation System</b>
<b>Title 22. Criminal Procedure</b>	<b>Title 53. Oklahoma Historical Societies and Associations</b>	
<b>Title 23. Damages</b>	<b>Title 54. Partnership</b>	
<b>Title 24. Debtor and Creditor</b>	<b>Title 56. Poor Persons</b>	
<b>Title 25. Definitions and General Provisions</b>	<b>Title 57. Prisons and Reformatories</b>	
<b>Title 26. Elections</b>	<b>Title 58. Probate Procedure</b>	
<b>Title 27. Eminent Domain</b>	<b>Title 59. Professions and Occupations</b>	
<b>Title 27A. Environment and Natural Resources</b>	<b>Title 60. Property</b>	

# **TYPES OF LEGISLATION**

## **A. Bills**

*(Examples HB1501; SB1; HB3501)*

- have the force and effect of law
- must be passed by both chambers
- must be signed by the Governor
- generally propose new statutes or amendments to existing statutes
- are used when the measure needs long term applicability

## **B. Joint Resolutions**

*(Example SJR1)*

- have the force and effect of law
- must be passed by both chambers
- must be signed by the Governor
  - (except when the measure submits a question to the vote of the people)
- usually will not become part of the state statutes
- are sometimes used when the measure has short term applicability

## **C. Concurrent Resolutions\*** *(Example HCR1001)*

- do not have the force and effect of law
  - must be passed by both chambers
  - are not signed by the Governor
  - will not become part of the state statutes
  - are used to express the will or opinion of both chambers
- (This includes amendments to the Joint Rules of the Legislature)

## **D. Simple Resolutions\*** *(Example HR1001)*

- do not have the force and effect of law
  - must pass only the chamber which introduced the measure
  - are not signed by the Governor
  - will not become part of the state statutes
  - are used to express the will or opinion of one chamber
- (This includes amendments to House Rules or Senate Rules)

\* Any issue that involves changing Federal or International Law must be written as an opinion of the House of Representatives and/or the Senate, through the use of a concurrent or simple resolution.

1                                   **EXAMPLE OF CREATING NEW LAW**  
2                                   **& AN EMERGENCY CLAUSE**

3  
4                                   STATE OF OKLAHOMA  
5                                   2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 58<sup>th</sup> Legislature (2022)

6  
7                   HOUSE BILL NO. 1501

By: Hatfield  
      of the House  
      and  
      McCoy  
      of the Senate

12                                   **AS INTRODUCED**

13  
14  
15                   An Act relating to credit card applications; providing short title; providing for  
16                   parental consent for minor applicants; providing for codification; and declaring an  
17                   emergency.

18  
19           BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

20  
21                   Section 1.       This act shall be known as the “Credit Card Act of 2022.”

22  
23                   Section 2.       NEW LAW   A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma  
24                   Statutes as Section 2-310.1 of Title 14A, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads  
25                   as follows:

26  
27                   Every person who applies for a credit card and who is under twenty-one (21) years of age  
28                   shall require consent of one (1) of his or her own parents or legal guardian before being able to  
29                   receive any such credit. Any parent or legal guardian has the right to refuse to sign such consent.  
30                   Those persons under twenty-one (21) years of age who are deemed independent from  
31                   guardianship are exempt from the necessity of parental consent.

32  
33                   Section 3.       It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace,  
34                   health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take  
35                   effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.  
36

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2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 58<sup>th</sup> Legislature (2022)

By: Murray  
of the Senate

## AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to mandatory dress codes in public schools; providing short title; amending Title 70 O.S. 1991, Section 11-101; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

Section 1. This Act shall be known as the “Student Dress Code Act of 2022.”

Section 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 1991, Section 11-101.1, is amended to read as follows:

Section 11-101.1. The board of education of each school district shall ~~permit those~~ require students and teachers to participate in a ~~voluntary~~ mandatory dress code as established by the local school board.

Section 3. This act shall become effective ninety (90) days after passage and approval.

[**NOTE:** When amending current statutes, be certain to include all present language and add your changes. Strike through any language you wish to delete and underline any language you wish to insert.]



## **EXAMPLE OF REPEALING A LAW**

STATE OF OKLAHOMA  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 58<sup>th</sup> Legislature (2022)

HOUSE BILL NO. 3501

By: Santa  
of the House  
Claus  
of the Senate

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to statutory marriage; repealing 43 O.S. Section 3.1; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

Section 1. REPEALER 43 O.S. 1981, Section 3.1, is hereby repealed.

Section 2. This act shall become effective ninety (90) days after passage and approval.

1                                   **EXAMPLE OF A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

2  
3                                   STATE OF OKLAHOMA  
4                                   2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 58<sup>th</sup> Legislature (2022)

5  
6   HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1601

By: Hamilton  
      of the House  
Jefferson  
      of the Senate

10  
11                                   **AS INTRODUCED**

12  
13                               A Concurrent Resolution declaring that Will Rogers is an Oklahoma treasure;  
14                               providing a holiday is declared; and setting a time for holiday.

15  
16               WHEREAS, Will Rogers was one of the legends of the American cinema; and

17  
18               WHEREAS, Will Rogers inspired many youths to follow the principles and ideals that he  
19               established; and

20  
21               WHEREAS, Will Rogers created a sense of patriotism and the American spirit that we all  
22               wish to instill in the children of Oklahoma.

23  
24               NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
25               OF THE 1<sup>st</sup> SESSION OF THE 58<sup>th</sup> OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE, THE SENATE  
26               CONCURRING THEREIN:

27  
28               THAT Will Rogers is recognized as the greatest actor in the history of cinema by the  
29               State of Oklahoma.

30  
31               THAT the third (3rd) Friday in September, 2021 be recognized as “Will Rogers Day” in  
32               the State of Oklahoma.

33  
34  
35  
36   **[NOTE:** In simple resolutions, the “THEREFORE” clause would only include whichever  
37   chamber is considering the legislation, i.e. “NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE  
38   HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE \_\_\_\_ SESSION OF THE \_\_\_\_ OKLAHOMA  
39   LEGISLATURE:” **or** “NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
40   \_\_\_\_ SESSION OF THE \_\_\_\_ OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:”. Please note further that there  
41   are **NO** section numbers, only “WHEREAS” and “THEREFORE” clauses.]

**EXAMPLE OF A BALLOT TITLE FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT**

STATE OF OKLAHOMA  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 58<sup>th</sup> Legislature (2022)

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5101

By: Sinatra  
of the Senate  
Davis and Martin  
of the House

AS INTRODUCED

A Joint Resolution directing the Secretary of State to refer to the people for their approval or rejection a proposed amendment to Article of the First of the Oklahoma Constitution, adding a state motto; providing ballot title; and directing filing.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE 58<sup>TH</sup> OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

SECTION 1. The Secretary of State shall refer to the people for their approval or rejection, as and in the manner provided by law, the following proposed amendment to Section 1 of Article 1 of the Constitution of the State of Oklahoma to read as follows:

## Article of the First

Section one. The name of this state shall be “Oklahoma” and the motto of this state shall be “Children are our future”.

SECTION 2. The Ballot Title for the proposed Constitutional amendment as set forth in SECTION 1 of the resolution shall be in the following form:

## BALLOT TITLE

Legislative Referendum No. \_\_\_\_\_

Question No. \_\_\_\_\_

THE GIST OF THE PROPOSITION IS AS FOLLOWS:

This measure amends Section 1 of Article 1 of the Oklahoma Constitution. It would officially designate Oklahoma’s state motto as “Children are our Future.”

SHALL THIS AMENDMENT BE APPROVED BY THE PEOPLE?

\_\_\_\_ YES, FOR THE AMENDMENT  
\_\_\_\_ NO, AGAINST THE AMENDMENT

SECTION 3. The Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives, immediately after the passage of this resolution, shall prepare and file one copy thereof, including the Ballot Title set forth in SECTION 2 hereof, with the Secretary of State and one copy with the Attorney General.

**[NOTE:** Although this is obviously a whimsical example (i.e. don't try this at home, or at session), there might be legitimate changes needed in the Oklahoma Constitution.]

## **CONCLUSION**

The Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy views helping those who stand for Oklahoma's children as a critical part of our mission. It is our hope that this guide will assist you in not only understanding how legislation is written in Oklahoma, but also provide insight on drafting your own ideas into a format that makes it easier to submit your thoughts to lawmakers.

As you engage more in the realm of advocacy, you will discover that the “right thing” does not always happen just because it is the best solution. It often takes a strong voice resonating through the halls of our capitol buildings to see the outcome which will best serve children. We who care for our state's children must make our voices heard, because we are the echo of the cry of every child who needs the system to serve them better. That is what we do every day, and we are honored to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with every advocate from across Oklahoma as we work to make this the best place for children to grow up and become the state which we are proud to call our home.

As you go forward, please begin by reaching out to your own lawmakers to visit with them about the issues you hold important. You will often find lawmakers are interested in your views and want to learn more about these issues from people with experience, and especially those who vote in their legislative districts in which they are elected to serve. If you are not a registered voter, please submit your paperwork so your vote will count in helping elect policymakers who will do the best job for the children of Oklahoma.

To learn more about the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy and the programs in which we host, please go to <https://oica.org> to learn more or make a donation to help us continue our mission of “Creating awareness, taking action, and supporting policy to improve the health, safety, and well-being of Oklahoma's children.”

