

# JON ECHOLS REPORT



**FEBRUARY 2026**

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## BIOGRAPHY

Name: Jonathan David Echols

Birth: Dec. 3, 1979

Residence: 7701 SW 104th St  
Oklahoma City, OK 73169

Family: Wife: Kristen; Three children: David, Ethan,  
Kaylee

Education: BA in political science, University of Oklahoma  
JD, Oklahoma City University School of Law

Professional Experience: Medical care businessman  
Lawyer

Political Experience: Oklahoma House of Representatives, 2013-2024



## TIMELINE

Dec. 3, 1979	Born
2002	Graduated from the University of Oklahoma
2005	Earned law degree from the Oklahoma City University School of Law
2009	Founded Turn Key Health
2012	Elected to Oklahoma House
2024	Left Oklahoma House

## TURN KEY HEALTH

### 1. **In 2009, Jon Echols and his business partners formed the company that would become Turn Key Health Clinics**

1. According to a July 30, 2024, report from the *Marshall Project*, “From the beginning, Turn Key has asserted that it can provide quality care to people in jails at a lower cost.

“The week after Cleveland County Sheriff Joe Lester took office in 2009, a bookkeeper brought him a stack of unpaid bills from the local hospital and health clinics. It added up to about \$1 million in medical debt for treating jail detainees, Lester said later in a court deposition. The department’s total budget for the year was half-spent, and the sheriff’s office was getting collection calls.

“‘When somebody goes to the hospital, whether it’s a headache or what, it’s a big expense,’ Lester said.

“Hospitalizations also strain jail staffing because a deputy often remains with the detainee until they return to jail. Lester reached out to Jon Echols, who ran a company that provided health care personnel to local nursing homes. The county awarded his company a contract to provide 24-hour nursing personnel at the jail. The company finished the first three months of the contract under budget and sent just one person to the hospital by ambulance, Echols told county officials in 2009, according to a local newspaper report. He and his business partners formed the company that would become Turn Key Health Clinics.”<sup>1</sup>

### 2. **As of 2024, Jon Echols was still listed as Turn Key’s president and founder. Echols’ 2023 financial disclosure showed that he retained a “non-controlling minority ownership interest” in the company, and received a salary through 2023**

1. According to a July 30, 2024, report from the *Marshall Project*, “Echols won a seat in the Oklahoma House of Representatives in 2012. A Republican, he now serves as House majority floor leader. In March, we asked Turn Key

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1 Cary Aspinwall, Brianna Bailey and Sachi McClendon, “This Company Promised to Improve Health Care in Jails. Dozens of Its Patients Have Died.,” *Marshall Project*, July 30, 2024

corporate leaders for an interview, including Echols, who was still listed as the company’s president and founder. He did not respond, but his title and photo have since been removed from the company’s website. His most recent financial disclosure, filed in May with the Oklahoma Ethics Commission, shows he retained a ‘non-controlling minority ownership interest’ in the company, and received a salary through 2023.”<sup>2</sup>

**3. *NonDoc* in March 2025: “While Echols no longer maintains a majority stake in the company, he remains in its employ”**

1. In a March 14, 2025, article, *NonDoc* reported, “While Echols no longer maintains a majority stake in the company, he remains in its employ.”<sup>3</sup>

**4. Turn Key Health has been called “an oft-maligned health care provider in correctional facilities that has faced frequent criticism for inmate deaths at jails contracted with the organization”**

1. In a Feb. 28, 2025, article, the *Perry Daily Journal* reported, “Confirming an open secret in the halls of the State Capitol, former House Rep. Jon Echols officially announced his candidacy to become Oklahoma’s next attorney general Wednesday afternoon, arguing that his values and experiences qualify him to be the state’s top lawyer.”<sup>4</sup>
2. According to the same article, “According to the practice’s website, he graduated at the top of his class from Oklahoma City University’s law school in 2005. He previously worked with the firm of Crowe & Dunlevy.

“In 2009, he founded Turn Key Health, an oft-maligned health care provider in correctional facilities that has faced frequent criticism for inmate deaths at jails contracted with the organization.

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<sup>2</sup> Cary Aspinwall, Brianna Bailey and Sachi McClendon, “This Company Promised to Improve Health Care in Jails. Dozens of Its Patients Have Died.” *Marshall Project*, July 30, 2024

<sup>3</sup> Tristan Loveless, “OK Supreme Court: Jail, prison health contractors entitled to sovereign immunity,” *NonDoc*, March 14, 2025

<sup>4</sup> Andrea Hancock, “Former House Rep. Jon Echols announces bid for AG,” *Perry Daily Journal*, Feb. 28, 2025

“After a sale of the company, he now serves as its president.

“In 2023, Echols told Oklahoma Watch he works mostly outside of Oklahoma to minimize perceived conflicts of interest.”<sup>5</sup>

**5. Since 2015, at least 160 lawsuits, including 30 involving inmate deaths, have been filed against Turn Key Health Clinics, LLC. Turn Key has won judgments in some and settled others, and two-thirds were dismissed—for reasons ranging from lack of merit to the legal failings of inmates representing themselves from jail, unaware of the complexities of the legal system**

1. In an April 14, 2023, article, *Newsweek* reported, “For months, Michelle Caddell had complained to Tulsa County jail officials of nonstop vaginal bleeding, discharge and pain.

“It wasn’t until she was bleeding through a menstrual pad every 20 minutes—and passing tissue from her vagina—that she was transported to an Oklahoma hospital to be screened for the cervical cancer that killed her at the age of 36, alleges a federal lawsuit filed on her behalf.

“‘There were nights where she would call and she would, you know, be weak,’ Cameron Lucas, Caddell’s 20-year-old son, said of the roughly 10 months his mother spent in jail on a charge dismissed after she died in 2020. ‘She would bleed out...and they wouldn’t send her to the hospital. They’d just send her back to the cell.’

“Her family’s case is one of 160—30 involving inmate deaths—filed since 2015 against Turn Key Health Clinics, LLC, the private Oklahoma City-based medical provider at the jail where Caddell was detained, according to a *Newsweek* analysis of court records. Forty lawsuits remain active; Turn Key has won judgments in some and settled others, and two-thirds were dismissed—for reasons ranging from lack of merit to the legal failings of inmates representing themselves from jail, unaware of the complexities of the legal system.”<sup>6</sup>

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5 Andrea Hancock, “Former House Rep. Jon Echols announces bid for AG,” *Perry Daily Journal*, Feb. 28, 2025

6 Valerie Bauman and Erik Ferkenhoff, “Jails Health Provider Sued After Inmates Left Dead and Disabled,” *Newsweek*, April 14, 2023

**6. In 2024, the *Marshall Project* and the *Frontier* published a multi-chapter report examining deaths at jails where Turn Key has provided services, including at the Oklahoma County Jail and the Cleveland County Jail**

1. In a March 14, 2025, article, *NonDoc* reported, “A unanimous Oklahoma Supreme Court reversed a published opinion of the Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals this week and held that Turn Key Health Clinics, a private company that contracts to provide medical services in jails, is entitled to sovereign immunity under the Oklahoma Governmental Tort Claims Act.

“Sovereign immunity prevents lawsuits against governments unless the immunity is waived. The unusual opinion found the appellate courts lacked jurisdiction to hear the case as filed, but also ‘recast’ the filings to give the Supreme Court jurisdiction to make the ruling on an important issue of law. The case involves a lawsuit filed by the husband of a woman who died in the Creek County Jail in 2016. District Court Judge Douglas Golden ruled that sovereign immunity prohibited the claim, the Court of Civil Appeals reversed that decision, but the Supreme Court reversed the lower appellate panel Tuesday.”<sup>7</sup>

2. According to the same article, “The Supreme Court's ruling is a major boon for companies like Turn Key Health that contract with jails and prisons in Oklahoma to provide medical services.

“With a footprint spanning jails in more than a dozen states, Turn Key Health was founded in Oklahoma by businesspersons that include former House Majority Leader Jon Echols, who recently launched a 2026 campaign for attorney general.

“While Echols no longer maintains a majority stake in the company, he remains in its employ.

“Last July, The Marshall Project and The Frontier published a multi-chapter report examining deaths at jails where Turn Key has provided services, including at the Oklahoma County Jail and the Cleveland County Jail.

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<sup>7</sup> Tristan Loveless, “OK Supreme Court: Jail, prison health contractors entitled to sovereign immunity,” *NonDoc*, March 14, 2025

“The company has also contracted with Tulsa County, Garvin County and many other counties in Oklahoma.”<sup>8</sup>

**7. According to the 2024 *Marshall Project* report, at least 50 people who were under Turn Key’s care died during the previous decade**

1. According to a July 30, 2024, report from the *Marshall Project*, “Two days after Thanksgiving in 2022, Shannon Hanchett walked into an AT&T store for a new phone, and ended up in handcuffs.

“Hanchett ran the Cookie Cottage, a popular bakery in this college town, where she made treats named for places across the state, from Stilwell Strawberry to Lawton Lemon. But lately, her mental health seemed to be fraying. She was falling behind on orders. Her marriage was crumbling. And the 38-year-old mother of two had picked fights with family and friends.

“It all detonated that day in the AT&T store. Employees phoned police after Hanchett began pacing, ranting and calling 911. Body camera footage shows an officer from the Norman Police Department talking to her for several minutes, then tackling, handcuffing and arresting her for misusing the emergency line.

“Like so many people experiencing mental health crises in the U.S., Hanchett landed not in a psychiatric hospital, but in a county jail. In her case, it was Norman’s Cleveland County Detention Center, which contracts with a for-profit company to provide medical care: Turn Key Health Clinics.”<sup>9</sup>

2. According to the same article, “At least 50 people who were under Turn Key’s care died during the past decade, an investigation by The Marshall Project and The Frontier found. Our reporting unearthed company policies and

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<sup>8</sup> Tristan Loveless, “OK Supreme Court: Jail, prison health contractors entitled to sovereign immunity,” *NonDoc*, March 14, 2025

<sup>9</sup> Cary Aspinwall, Brianna Bailey and Sachi McClendon, “This Company Promised to Improve Health Care in Jails. Dozens of Its Patients Have Died.,” *Marshall Project*, July 30, 2024

practices that have endangered people in jail — especially those with mental illness.”<sup>10</sup>

**8. In dozens of cases, Turn Key employees didn’t send people to the hospital when they were in crisis, catatonic or refusing to eat or drink. The company staffed mental health and other medical positions with low-level nursing assistants trained to perform basic tasks like taking vital signs, but not to diagnose or assess medical conditions**

1. According to a July 30, 2024, report from the *Marshall Project*, “As local jails have morphed into some of the largest mental health treatment facilities in the U.S., many counties have outsourced medical care to private companies that promise to contain rising costs. Turn Key is one of the fastest growing in the middle of the country.

“At least 50 people who were under Turn Key’s care died during the past decade, an investigation by The Marshall Project and The Frontier found. Our reporting unearthed company policies and practices that have endangered people in jail — especially those with mental illness.

“In dozens of cases, Turn Key employees didn’t send people to the hospital when they were in crisis, catatonic or refusing to eat or drink. The company staffed mental health and other medical positions with low-level nursing assistants trained to perform basic tasks like taking vital signs, but not to diagnose or assess medical conditions.”<sup>11</sup>

**9. Sheriffs raised concerns about Turn Key not providing the proper medications for people in jail with mental illness**

1. According to a July 30, 2024, report from the *Marshall Project*, “We obtained records from sheriffs who raised concerns about the company not providing the proper medications for people in jail with mental illness. ‘I have been told that Turn Key does not prescribe those types of medications,’ one Texas

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10 Cary Aspinwall, Brianna Bailey and Sachi McClendon, “This Company Promised to Improve Health Care in Jails. Dozens of Its Patients Have Died.,” *Marshall Project*, July 30, 2024

11 Cary Aspinwall, Brianna Bailey and Sachi McClendon, “This Company Promised to Improve Health Care in Jails. Dozens of Its Patients Have Died.,” *Marshall Project*, July 30, 2024

sheriff wrote in a 2022 email. ‘This is causing a cascade of problems not only for their safety and well-being, but for the staff and facility as well.’<sup>12</sup>

**10. In December 2024, a Turn Key employee was among six people indicted by a federal grand jury for “deprivation of rights” and “deliberate indifference to medical needs” related to the death of Kayla Lee Turley**

1. In a March 14, 2025, article, *NonDoc* reported, “In December, a Turn Key employee was among six people indicted by a federal grand jury for ‘deprivation of rights’ and ‘deliberate indifference to medical needs’ related to the death of Kayla Lee Turley.”<sup>13</sup>

**11. According to the indictment, the Turn Key nurse “knew that (Turley), a pretrial detainee in their care and custody, faced a risk of serious physical harm at the hands of other inmates in (Turley’s) GCJ cell, and willfully failed to take reasonable measures to abate that risk”**

1. In a Dec. 10, 2024, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “A federal grand jury in the Western District of Oklahoma has charged current and former Garvin County jail officers and a former jail nurse in connection with the death of a woman last year.

“The two-count indictment alleges that on Aug. 6, 2023, former Garvin County jail Sgt. Jennifer Baxter, former jail deputies Alesha Danielle Ingram and Vincent Matthews, and former jail nurse Lynnsee Noel violated the constitutional rights of Kayla Turley, a 32-year-old pretrial inmate, by acting “with deliberate indifference to a substantial risk of serious harm.’

“‘Specifically, Baxter, Ingram, Matthews, and Noel knew that (Turley), a pretrial detainee in their care and custody, faced a risk of serious physical harm at the hands of other inmates in (Turley’s) GCJ cell, and willfully failed to take reasonable measures to abate that risk,’ the indictment states.”<sup>14</sup>

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12 Cary Aspinwall, Brianna Bailey and Sachi McClendon, “This Company Promised to Improve Health Care in Jails. Dozens of Its Patients Have Died.,” *Marshall Project*, July 30, 2024

13 Tristan Loveless, “OK Supreme Court: Jail, prison health contractors entitled to sovereign immunity,” *NonDoc*, March 14, 2025

14 Josh Dulaney, “Current and former Garvin County jailers, nurse indicted more than year after inmate’s death,” *Oklahoman*, Dec. 10, 2024

2. According to the same article, “Noel, the jail nurse, was contracted through Turn Key Health to work at the jail, according to the indictment.

“The health care provider recently stopped providing services for the troubled Oklahoma County jail.”<sup>15</sup>

1. ***Oklahoman* in 2024: “Turn Key had come under intense criticism for allegedly contributing to poor conditions at the jail and the high rate of inmate deaths”**

1. In a Dec. 10, 2024, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “Turn Key had come under intense criticism for allegedly contributing to poor conditions at the jail and the high rate of inmate deaths.

“A report by The Frontier found that Turn Key employees didn’t send people to the hospital in dozens of cases when they were in crisis, catatonic or refusing to eat or drink.”<sup>16</sup>

2. **According to a 2024 lawsuit, Turn Key Health Clinics staff refused care, falsified records and mocked Shannon Hanchett as she descended into an ultimately fatal mental health crisis in late 2022**

1. In a Sept. 11, 2024, article, *Oklahoma Watch* reported, “Cleveland County detention officers and Turn Key Health Clinics staff refused care, falsified records and mocked Shannon Hanchett as she descended into an ultimately fatal mental health crisis in late 2022, according to an amended complaint filed in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma on Sept. 9.

“The filing comes weeks after the U.S. District Judge Bernard Jones granted the defendants’ motion to dismiss the wrongful death lawsuit brought by Shannon Hanchett’s widower Daniel Hanchett, ruling on Aug. 19 that there was insufficient evidence to show jail staff were deliberately indifferent. In

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15 Josh Dulaney, “Current and former Garvin County jailers, nurse indicted more than year after inmate’s death,” *Oklahoman*, Dec. 10, 2024

16 Josh Dulaney, “Current and former Garvin County jailers, nurse indicted more than year after inmate’s death,” *Oklahoman*, Dec. 10, 2024

his ruling, Jones gave Daniel Hanchett’s attorneys 21 days to file an amended complaint outlining new evidence.

“Referencing closed-circuit video footage that remains shielded from the public under a federal protective order, the 73-page filing details Hanchett’s deteriorating mental and physical health as jail staff refused to provide care. As county officials sought to withhold access to the footage, the initial complaint filed in January was based on medical records.

“A Norman police officer arrested Hanchett, a 38-year-old mother of two who ran a popular bakery in downtown Norman, at an AT&T store on Nov. 26 on a misdemeanor obstruction charge.

“While the officer noted in their arrest report that Hanchett was exhibiting signs of mental illness, they took her to the Cleveland County Detention Center. Her family opted not to post her \$1,000 bond because they feared that she might be a danger to herself or others, according to an investigation by The Marshall Project and The Frontier.”<sup>17</sup>

**1. A nurse who worked for Turn Key at the Garfield County jail allegedly did nothing to intervene while a hallucinating man was kept in a restraint chair for more than 48 hours. Anthony Huff ultimately died restrained in the chair**

1. In an Aug. 13, 2017, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “A nurse who worked for a private company at the Garfield County jail allegedly did nothing to intervene while a hallucinating man was kept in a restraint chair for more than 48 hours. Anthony Huff, 58, ultimately died restrained in the chair.

“The contractor, Oklahoma City-based Turn Key Health Clinics LLC, is the largest medical care provider to county jails in the state.

“Turn Key’s owners include state Rep. Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, and former University of Oklahoma football player Trent Smith, who was tight end on the 2000 National Championship team.

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<sup>17</sup> Keaton Ross, “Attorneys Cite Horrifying Details from Jail Video in Refiled Lawsuit Over Shannon Hanchett’s Death,” *Oklahoma Watch*, Sept. 11, 2024

“Court documents, jail incident reports and medical examiner's records reviewed by The Oklahoman show several deaths and severe injuries at county jails that contract with Turn Key to provide medical care for inmates.”<sup>18</sup>

2. **An El Reno man died in 2016 after being found naked, unconscious and covered in his own waste in a cell at the Canadian County Detention Center. A man in the Creek County jail died in September from a blood clot in his lungs after he repeatedly complained over several days of breathing problems and lost consciousness multiple times. Another former inmate claimed he was permanently paralyzed from the mid-chest down after medical staff at the Muskogee County jail told him he was faking his condition. All three men were held at county jails where Turn Key is contracted to provide medical care and the circumstances resulted in lawsuits**

1. In an Aug. 13, 2017, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “An El Reno man died in 2016 after being found naked, unconscious and covered in his own waste in a cell at the Canadian County Detention Center. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner found the man had experienced a seizure in the days before his death.

“A man in the Creek County jail died in September from a blood clot in his lungs after he repeatedly complained over several days of breathing problems and lost consciousness multiple times.

“Another former inmate claims he is permanently paralyzed from the mid-chest down after medical staff at the Muskogee County jail told him he was faking his condition.

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<sup>18</sup> Brianna Bailey, “Oklahoma contractor sued several times over jail deaths,” *Oklahoman*, Sept. 3, 2017

“All three men were held at county jails where Turn Key is contracted to provide medical care and the circumstances resulted in lawsuits.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Brianna Bailey, “Oklahoma contractor sued several times over jail deaths,” *Oklahoman*, Sept. 3, 2017

## PPP BAILOUT

### 1. Jon Echols is a co-owner of Sooner Medical Staffing

1. In a Jan. 22, 2021, article, *NonDoc* reported, “Gov. Kevin Stitt today named former Oklahoma Employment Security Commission commissioner and former University of Oklahoma football player Trent Smith as his appointment to fill the vacant seat on the State Board of Education.”<sup>20</sup>
  
2. According to the same article, “Smith is a co-owner of Sooner Medical Staffing, along with House Majority Floor Leader Jon Echols (R-OKC). Echols praised Smith as a ‘fighter’ Friday.  
  
“Trent has been one of my closest friends for over 30 years. I know him to be a passionate advocate for Oklahoma and Oklahoma’s children,’ Echols said. ‘Trent will always remember that education exists for kids. He has been a fighter his entire life and I have no doubt he will bring that same intensity when it comes to fighting for Oklahoma schools and most importantly, Oklahoma’s sons and daughters.”<sup>21</sup>
  
3. According to his 2020 financial disclosure statement, as filed with the Oklahoma Ethics Commission, Jon Echols disclosed a material financial interest in 2020 in Sooner Medical Staffing.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Megan Prather and Tres Savage, “Trent Smith appointed to State Board of Education,” *NonDoc*, Jan. 22, 2021

<sup>21</sup> Megan Prather and Tres Savage, “Trent Smith appointed to State Board of Education,” *NonDoc*, Jan. 22, 2021

<sup>22</sup> 2020 Financial Disclosure Statement: Jon Echols, Oklahoma Ethics Commission, May 14, 2021

**2. Sooner Medical Staffing took more than \$595,000 in Covid PPP bailout money**

1. According to the ProPublica PPP Loan Tracking Database, on April 3, 2020, Sooner Medical Staffing, LLC, of Oklahoma City, OK received a \$298,400 PPP Covid loan. According to the database, the loan was used for payroll for 162 employees, and the loan was forgiven as of Feb. 1, 2021.<sup>23</sup>
  
2. According to the ProPublica PPP Loan Tracking Database, on Jan. 20, 2021, Sooner Medical Staffing, LLC, of Oklahoma City, OK received a \$298,400 PPP Covid loan. According to the database, the loan was used for payroll for 37 employees, and the loan was forgiven as of Aug. 18, 2021.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Tracking PPP: Sooner Medical Staffing, LLC, ProPublica, Accessed June 26, 2025

<sup>24</sup> Tracking PPP: Sooner Medical Staffing, LLC, ProPublica, Accessed June 26, 2025

## PERSONAL WEALTH

### 3. **Jon Echols calls himself “a local small business owner and serial entrepreneur”**

1. According to the Jon Echols for Attorney General website, “Jon is a local small business owner and serial entrepreneur— starting his first business in college.

“Jon understands what it takes to run a business and create jobs in our economy.”<sup>25</sup>

### 4. **Turn Key Health is a multimillion-dollar company with contracts to provide medical care for more than 75 jails — and 23,000 people — in 10 states**

1. According to a July 30, 2024, report from the *Marshall Project*, “Two days after Thanksgiving in 2022, Shannon Hanchett walked into an AT&T store for a new phone, and ended up in handcuffs.

“Hanchett ran the Cookie Cottage, a popular bakery in this college town, where she made treats named for places across the state, from Stilwell Strawberry to Lawton Lemon. But lately, her mental health seemed to be fraying. She was falling behind on orders. Her marriage was crumbling. And the 38-year-old mother of two had picked fights with family and friends.

“It all detonated that day in the AT&T store. Employees phoned police after Hanchett began pacing, ranting and calling 911. Body camera footage shows an officer from the Norman Police Department talking to her for several minutes, then tackling, handcuffing and arresting her for misusing the emergency line.

“Like so many people experiencing mental health crises in the U.S., Hanchett landed not in a psychiatric hospital, but in a county jail. In her case, it was Norman’s Cleveland County Detention Center, which contracts with a for-profit company to provide medical care: Turn Key Health Clinics.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Meet Jon, Jon Echols for Attorney General website, Accessed Aug. 27, 2025

<sup>26</sup> Cary Aspinwall, Brianna Bailey and Sachi McClendon, “This Company Promised to Improve Health Care in Jails. Dozens of Its Patients Have Died.,” *Marshall Project*, July 30, 2024

2. According to the same article, “Echols won a seat in the Oklahoma House of Representatives in 2012. A Republican, he now serves as House majority floor leader. In March, we asked Turn Key corporate leaders for an interview, including Echols, who was still listed as the company’s president and founder. He did not respond, but his title and photo have since been removed from the company’s website. His most recent financial disclosure, filed in May with the Oklahoma Ethics Commission, shows he retained a ‘non-controlling minority ownership interest’ in the company, and received a salary through 2023.

“Turn Key has since expanded into a multimillion-dollar company with contracts to provide medical care for more than 75 jails — and 23,000 people — in 10 states.”<sup>27</sup>

## 5. Turn Key Health has won millions of dollars in government contracts

1. In a Dec. 9, 2021, article, the *Advocate* reported, “The East Baton Rouge Metro Council has approved a new \$6 million annual contract for an Oklahoma-based private company to run the jail medical program.

“The vote Wednesday was a long time coming, according to local activists who spent years demanding better health care for inmates at East Baton Rouge Parish Prison, where the death rate remains well above the national average for pretrial detention facilities. The vast majority of inmates there are awaiting trial, not yet convicted of a crime.

“According to the new contract, Oklahoma-based Turn Key Health Clinics will replace the embattled current provider, CorrectHealth.”<sup>28</sup>

2. In a Sept. 22, 2021, article, the *Dallas Observer* reported, “On a balmy evening last November in Tyler, Enus Lewis finally came undone.

“After dark, Lewis left his mother’s house and staggered into oncoming traffic on the busiest road he could find, hoping an oncoming car would kill him.

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<sup>27</sup> Cary Aspinwall, Brianna Bailey and Sachi McClendon, “This Company Promised to Improve Health Care in Jails. Dozens of Its Patients Have Died.” *Marshall Project*, July 30, 2024

<sup>28</sup> Lea Skene, “Metro Council approves \$6 million jail medical contract after years of ‘tough conversations’,” *Advocate*, Dec. 9, 2021

“Months of battling a tidal wave of grief had sharpened Lewis’ schizophrenia. The voices telling him to hurt himself, that others were trying to hurt him, hit a fever pitch. He’d lost his infant son, his lifelong best friend and now his girlfriend of eight years and mother of his children – and it was all too much.”<sup>29</sup>

3. According to the same article, “Turn Key Health Clinics, an Oklahoma City-based corrections healthcare provider, secured a \$2.86 million annual contract in February 2021 to provide medical services to those held in Smith County Jail. Under its contract with Turn Key, the Smith County Jail has expanded its mental health and medical coverage for those in custody, Smith County Sheriff Larry Smith told ABC’s Tyler affiliate, KLTU.

“Turn Key is facing at least eight separate lawsuits filed by families of people who were seriously injured or died in Oklahoma county jails following alleged medical negligence by Turn Key staff. (The Smith County Sheriff’s Office didn’t respond to inquiries as to why it chose to contract with Turn Key.)”<sup>30</sup>

**6. Jon Echols lives in a home that is worth an estimated \$889,000**

1. According to his financial disclosure statement, Jon Echols lives at 7701 SW 104th St. Oklahoma City, OK 73169.<sup>31</sup>
2. According to Zillow.com, the home located at 7701 SW 104th St. Oklahoma City, OK 73169, has an estimated value of \$889,100.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Michael Murney, “A Texas Man Begged for Mental Health Help. Instead, He Ended Up in Jail Time and Again,” *Dallas Observer*, Sept. 22, 2021

<sup>30</sup> Michael Murney, “A Texas Man Begged for Mental Health Help. Instead, He Ended Up in Jail Time and Again,” *Dallas Observer*, Sept. 22, 2021

<sup>31</sup> Financial Disclosure for Elected State Officers: Jon Echols, Oklahoma Ethics Commission, May 14, 2024

<sup>32</sup> [www.zillow.com/homedetails/7701-SW-104th-St-Oklahoma-City-OK-73169/66897729\\_zpid/](https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/7701-SW-104th-St-Oklahoma-City-OK-73169/66897729_zpid/)



## JAIL CONTRACT

### **7. In 2016, Turn Key Health submitted the lowest-cost proposal for medical services at the Tulsa Jail**

1. In an Aug. 16, 2016, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “A company with ties to a state representative has submitted the lowest-cost proposal for medical services at the Tulsa Jail, it was learned Monday.

“Officials stressed that cost is only one element considered in evaluating the three proposals opened Monday morning, and the contract — worth roughly \$450,000 to \$550,000 per month — won’t be awarded until at least September.”<sup>33</sup>

### **8. Jon Echols’ involvement in the jail contract attracted some attention because he and two other Turn Key executives contributed \$1,000 each to Sheriff Vic Regalado’s election campaign. Sooner Medical Staffing also contributed \$2,000 to Regalado**

1. In an Aug. 16, 2016, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “State Rep. Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, is a partner in Turn Key Health, one of three companies that submitted proposals. His involvement in the jail contract attracted some attention because he and two other Turn Key executives contributed \$1,000 each to Sheriff Vic Regalado’s election campaign.

“Another company associated with Echols, Sooner Medical Staffing, contributed \$2,000 to Regalado.

“Echols has donated to several other candidates, including two of Regalado’s opponents in last spring’s elections.

“Echols downplayed the link to Regalado’s campaign and said he believes that his company’s proposal was the best submitted.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Randy Krehbiel, “Business tied to state rep who donated to sheriff’s campaign submits low bid for medical services at Tulsa Jail,” *Tulsa World*, Aug. 16, 2016

<sup>34</sup> Randy Krehbiel, “Business tied to state rep who donated to sheriff’s campaign submits low bid for medical services at Tulsa Jail,” *Tulsa World*, Aug. 16, 2016

**9. Turn Key would not have been eligible for the contract, had a requirement that providers already serve a correctional facility with at least 1,000 beds not been changed to 500 beds. Without the change, only one company, the current provider, would have been eligible for the deal**

1. In an Aug. 18, 2016, editorial, the *Tulsa World* wrote, “A company with ties to a state legislator who was also a contributor to the election campaign of Tulsa County Sheriff Vic Regalado has submitted the low proposal for Tulsa Jail medical services.

“State Rep. Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, is a partner in Turn Key Health, one of three companies that submitted proposals. He and two other Turn Key executives contributed \$1,000 each to Regalado’s election campaign. Another company associated with Echols, Sooner Medical Staffing, contributed \$2,000 to Regalado.

“Turn Key would not have been eligible for the contract, though, had a requirement that providers already serve a correctional facility with at least 1,000 beds not been changed to 500 beds. Without the change, only one company, the current provider, would have been eligible for the deal.

“Hmmm.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Editorial, “Something smells fishy with the jail medical contract,” *Tulsa World*, Aug. 18, 2016

## TAXES AND FEES

**10. In 2018, Jon Echols voted for a package of Oklahoma tax hikes aimed at generating hundreds of millions of new dollars for teacher pay. The bill was designed to generate about \$450 million for lawmakers to spend**

1. On March 26, 2018, Jon Echols voted for H.B. 1010, a bill imposing additional tax levy upon cigarettes and cigars; imposing tax on gasoline and diesel fuel; gross production tax; hotel tax (Passed 79-19).<sup>36</sup>
2. In a March 28, 2018, article, the Associated Press reported, “A package of Oklahoma tax hikes aimed at generating hundreds of millions of new dollars for teacher pay and averting statewide school closures received final legislative approval Wednesday night.

“The Senate voted 36-10 to increase taxes on oil and gas production, cigarettes, fuel and lodging — narrowly receiving the three-fourth’s majority needed to pass — and the chamber broke into applause afterward. The House passed the plan Monday. It is designed to generate about \$450 million for lawmakers to spend, and Gov. Mary Fallin said she ‘absolutely’ plans to sign the package.”<sup>37</sup>

**1. The bill included a \$1-per-pack tax on cigarettes, a 3-cent increase on gasoline, 6-cent hike on diesel and an increase on the oil and gas production tax from 2 percent to 5 percent**

1. In a March 28, 2018, article, the Associated Press reported, “‘We finally got the job done, and I applaud the bipartisanship of the House and Senate,’ Fallin said just moments after the Senate approved the bill.

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36 House Bill 1010, Oklahoma House RCS no. 1282, March 26, 2018

37 Sean Murphy, “Oklahoma Legislature passes tax hikes for teacher pay,” Associated Press, March 28, 2018

“It includes a \$1-per-pack tax on cigarettes, a 3-cent increase on gasoline, 6-cent hike on diesel and an increase on the oil and gas production tax from 2 per cent to 5 per cent. Amid a furious, last-minute lobbying effort by the hospitality industry, House and Senate leaders agreed to pass a separate measure to repeal the \$5-per-night hotel and motel tax that was projected to raise about \$45 million.”<sup>38</sup>

**2. In 2017, Jon Echols voted to repeal the planned reduction of the state’s top income tax rate from 5 percent to 4.85 percent**

1. On April 19, 2017, Jon Echols voted for S.B. 170, a bill providing for tax rate change subject to certain requirement; repealing specified rate change (Passed 75-12).<sup>39</sup>
2. In an April 22, 2017, article, the *Tahlequah Daily Press* reported, “Before they get to work on the budget, Oklahoma lawmakers are midway through the portion of the session wherein each chamber votes on bills passed by the other.

“One of the big measures to pass the House of Representatives this week was Senate Bill 170, which repeals the planned reduction of the state’s top income tax rate from 5 percent to 4.85 percent. SB 170 passed 75-12, with George Faught, R-Muskogee; Will Fourkiller, D-Stilwell; and Matt Meredith, D-Tahlequah, in favor.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Sean Murphy, “Oklahoma Legislature passes tax hikes for teacher pay,” Associated Press, March 28, 2018

<sup>39</sup> Senate Bill 170, Oklahoma House RCS no. 529, April 19, 2017

<sup>40</sup> Sean Rowley, “House approves criminal justice reform bills,” *Tahlequah Daily Press*, April 22, 2017

**3. In 2017, Jon Echols voted for a bill that would increase the gross production tax on existing horizontal oil and gas wells created between July 1, 2011 and July 1, 2015**

1. On May 23, 2017, Jon Echols voted for H.B. 2429, a bill related to gross production taxes; reduced rate; apportionment applicable to certain rate (Passed 54-44).<sup>41</sup>
2. In a May 23, 2017, article, KFOR reported, “A bill that would increase the rate of taxes on oil and gas production from horizontally drilled wells was advanced by a house committee late Monday night.

“The bill, HB 2429, would change the incentive rate for wells that started producing between 7/1/2011-7/1/2015 from one percent to four percent, until the well's incentive period expires after 48 months. After 48 months, the tax on the wells would increase to seven percent.

“As these wells fall off (the incentive window of 48 months) they will no longer be at four percent, they will be at seven percent,’ said Rep. Kevin Wallace, R-Wellston, co-chair of the Joint Committee on Appropriations and Budget.”<sup>42</sup>

3. In a May 23, 2017, article, KFOR reported, “Lawmakers have taken the first step toward increasing taxes on existing horizontal oil and gas wells, which would raise revenue for the state.

“The House passed a bill Tuesday morning that is expected to bring in nearly \$74 million in revenue next year, by increasing the so-called ‘Gross Production Tax’ from one percent to four percent on wells created between July 1, 2011 and July 1, 2015.

“After four years, the wells would begin paying the standard seven percent gross production tax.

“You try to figure out: how can you balance the budget, how can you have efficiencies, cuts, bring in some revenue and actually grow the economy?”

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41 House Bill 2429, Oklahoma House RCS no. 820, May 23, 2017

42 Bill Miston, “Gas and oil production tax bill advances out of committee after late night meeting,” KFOR, May 23, 2017

said Rep. Kevin Wallace who presented the bill. ‘That is what this bill is designed to do.’

“The bill passed 54-44, despite strong opposition from Democrats, who called it a one-time fix that would not solve the long-term budget issues.”<sup>43</sup>

4. According to the same article, “Democrats also argued passing such a bill was unconstitutional in the last week of session. By law, revenue-raising bills cannot be passed in the last five days of the legislative year and must receive a three-fourths supermajority vote.

“‘We’ve heard time and time again that this is going to raise revenue,’ said Rep. Emily Virgin. ‘It doesn’t take a legal scholar to figure out that this is a revenue bill.’

“Republicans countered by arguing the bill was not increasing taxes, but merely adjusting a tax incentive.

“‘We’re trying to follow both the spirit and the letter of the law,’ said Rep. Jon Echols, the majority floor leader. ‘If we’re taking away an exemption or just putting it to the regular tax rate, that’s not [raising revenue].’

“Echols also said raising revenue was an effect of the bill but not the cause.”<sup>44</sup>

#### **4. In 2017, Jon Echols voted for a bill that would repeal a tax exemption on purchases of new and used vehicles**

1. On May 24, 2017, Jon Echols voted for H.B. 2433, a bill regarding sales tax exemptions for motor vehicle sales; exemptions subject to other tax; reducing exemption amount (Passed 52-47).<sup>45</sup>
2. In a May 24, 2017, article, KFOR reported, “Debate raged in both the House and Senate on Wednesday over whether two measures passed were constitutional.

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43 Lorne Fultonberg, “House passes bill to increase taxes on oil,” KFOR, May 23, 2017

44 Lorne Fultonberg, “House passes bill to increase taxes on oil,” KFOR, May 23, 2017

45 House Bill 2433, Oklahoma House RCS no. 838, May 24, 2017

“The legislature is not supposed to hear revenue raising measures in the last 5 days of session.

“But proponents of the measures argued these were being passed for reasons other than revenue and plugging the budget hole.

“The House passed a measure that repeals a tax exemption on purchases of new and used vehicles.

“Oklahomans buying vehicles will now have to pay a 1.25% sales tax on these purchases.

“Proponents argued that this is simply repealing an exemption that's been in place for years and that it's good policy.

“This still keeps Oklahoma with a competitive advantage with every state around us with the exception of New Mexico. This will not stop the sale of vehicles,’ said Rep. Jon Echols.

“Opponents said it is a new tax and a way to try and plug the budget hole at the last minute.

“We are increasing taxes and raising revenue to balance the budget,’ said Rep. Emily Virgin.

“The measure passed 52-47.”<sup>46</sup>

**5. The *Tulsa World* called the bill “a \$110 million increase in what amounts to the sales tax on new and used cars”**

1. In a May 24, 2017, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “On Tuesday morning, the House narrowly passed another key piece of the budget when it approved a \$110 million increase in what amounts to the sales tax on new and used cars.

“Rep. Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, said House Bill 2433 lifts an exemption that will raise the effective tax rate on vehicle sales from 3.25 percent to 4.5 percent, which is the same as the state retail sales and use taxes.

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<sup>46</sup> Sarah Stewart, “Legislature passes measures increasing fees on vehicle purchases and cigarettes,” KFOR, May 24, 2017

“Echols said that because HB 2433 would remove an exemption instead of raise an existing rate or impose a new tax, it does not meet the legal definition of a revenue bill and required only 51 votes for passage. The bill barely got the simple majority, passing 52-47.

“All 26 Democrats opposed the bill, questioning its constitutionality and labeling it another Republican effort to shift the state’s tax burden onto the middle class. Echols dismissed their complaints as ‘more grandstanding, more obstruction, more doing everything you can to sidetrack the budget.’”<sup>47</sup>

**6. In 2017, Jon Echols voted for a bill that included a \$1.50 tax on cigarettes, \$0.06 increased tax on gas and diesel, new taxation on low-point beer, plus a 4 percent gross production tax on big oil and gas wells for 36 months**

1. On Nov. 8, 2017, Jon Echols voted for H.B. 1054, a bill regarding the tax levy upon cigarettes and tobacco products; motor fuel tax; taxation on low-point beer; gross production tax; limiting period where certain reduced rates are applicable (Failed 71-27).
2. In a Nov. 9, 2017, article, KFOR reported, “A funding bill aimed to tackle the state budget crisis failed on the Oklahoma House floor.

“The measure, known as House Bill 1054X, did not reach the necessary votes Wednesday with 71 members voting in support and 27 members against it.

“The bill needed 76 votes to pass.

“The bill included a \$1.50 tax on cigarettes, \$0.06 increased tax on gas and diesel, new taxation on low-point beer, plus a 4% gross production tax (‘GPT’) on big oil and gas wells for 36 months.

“Here is a list of how members of the Oklahoma House of Representatives voted on the budget bill.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Barbara Hoberock, “Senate passes \$6.8 billion budget bill late Wednesday,” *Tulsa World*, May 24, 2017

<sup>48</sup> Dallas Franklin, “How members of the Oklahoma House of Representatives voted on failed budget bill,” KFOR, Nov. 9, 2017

**7. After the bill failed, Jon Echols began working on potential “tweaks” to the sweeping package of tax hikes on tobacco, fuel, alcohol, and oil and gas production**

1. In a Nov. 24, 2017, article, the Associated Press reported, “Work already has begun on potential ‘tweaks’ to a broad tax-increase plan to shore up the state's budget and generate funding for a teacher pay raise, a top Republican Oklahoma lawmaker said Friday.

“Majority Floor Leader Jon Echols said he’s remaining in touch with the governor’s office and working on potential ‘tweaks’ to the sweeping package of tax hikes on tobacco, fuel, alcohol, and oil and gas production that fell five votes short in the House after an eight-week special session.”<sup>49</sup>

**8. Jon Echols: “I have been speaking to ‘no’ vote members since that vote occurred, and none of them have expressed to me they have changed their votes. So I’m exploring options about how we could make tweaks to the plan to bring more votes”**

1. In a Nov. 24, 2017, article, the Associated Press reported, “I have been speaking to “no” vote members since that vote occurred, and none of them have expressed to me they have changed their votes,’ said Echols, a Republican from Oklahoma City, ‘so I’m exploring options about how we could make tweaks to the plan to bring more votes.’

“Republican Gov. Mary Fallin vetoed a backup budget plan approved by lawmakers that would have further slashed agency budgets, and she implored them to return for a second special session. A date for the session hasn't been set, and Fallin hasn’t outlined her call for what lawmakers can consider.”<sup>50</sup>

**9. In January 2018, Jon Echols said that he would bring the Step Up Oklahoma plan to the floor for a vote. The bill called for raising taxes and making other changes to the tune of about \$750 million to pay for a \$5,000 teacher pay raise and fund core services**

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49 Sean Murphy, “Oklahoma House leader working on ‘tweaks’ to failed tax plan,” Associated Press, Nov. 24, 2017

50 Sean Murphy, “Oklahoma House leader working on ‘tweaks’ to failed tax plan,” Associated Press, Nov. 24, 2017

1. In a Jan. 31, 2018, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “The Oklahoma House will not wait long to vote on a massive tax and reform plan that is gaining support among various organizations.

“Lawmakers return to the Capitol on Monday.

“House Majority Floor Leader Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, said Tuesday he will bring the Step Up Oklahoma plan to the floor in the lower chamber ‘early in the session.’

“‘People are hungry for a solution,’ Echols said. ‘I am not going to put on artificial timelines. We are definitely still interested in dialogue with members that may have concerns.’

“The plan calls for raising taxes and making other changes to the tune of about \$750 million to pay for a \$5,000 teacher pay raise and fund core services. It also includes some reforms, such as letting voters decide whether to reduce the 75 percent supermajority required in the Legislature for a tax increase and to add four years to the 12-year term limit for lawmakers.”<sup>51</sup>

**10. The tax increases included adding \$1.50 to a pack of cigarettes and 6 cents to a gallon of gasoline and diesel fuel. It also included increasing the oil and natural gas gross production tax to 4 percent from 2 percent and changes to the income tax structure**

1. In a Jan. 31, 2018, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “The tax increases include adding \$1.50 to a pack of cigarettes and 6 cents to a gallon of gasoline and diesel fuel. It also includes increasing the oil and natural gas gross production tax to 4 percent from 2 percent and changes to the income tax structure.

“Echols said some of the revenue-raising measures such as the cigarette and gasoline taxes can be put in one bill and would require a supermajority.

“Others, such as changes to the income tax, would only need a majority plus one, Echols said.

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<sup>51</sup> Barbara Hoberock, “Oklahoma House expected to vote quickly on a massive tax and reform package,” *Tulsa World*, Jan. 31, 2018

“The income tax proposal lowers rates and removes deductions as opposed to increasing the income tax,’ Echols said.

“He said there is a lot of support for the proposal in the House Republican caucus.”<sup>52</sup>

**11. Jon Echols on the bill: “I would like to see that same strong support coming from the Democrat caucus”**

1. In a Jan. 31, 2018, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “I would like to see that same strong support coming from the Democrat caucus,’ he said.”<sup>53</sup>

**12. In February 2018, Jon Echols voted for the Step Up Oklahoma tax increase bill, which included increases to taxes on tobacco, motor fuel, wind energy and a 4 percent gross production tax. The bill failed to receive the needed votes to pass**

1. On Feb. 12, 2018, Jon Echols voted for H.B. 1033, a bill providing for additional levies of cigarette taxes, motor fuel taxes and gross production taxes (Failed 63-35).<sup>54</sup>
2. In a Feb. 14, 2018, article, KFOR reported, “After a budget bill failed to receive the needed votes to pass, a state agency is taking steps to save money.

“House Bill 1033, which was a part of the ‘Step Up Oklahoma’ plan, called for increases to taxes on tobacco, motor fuel, wind energy and a 4 percent gross production tax.

“The measure needed 76 votes to pass, but failed 63-35.

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52 Barbara Hoberock, “Oklahoma House expected to vote quickly on a massive tax and reform package,” *Tulsa World*, Jan. 31, 2018

53 Barbara Hoberock, “Oklahoma House expected to vote quickly on a massive tax and reform package,” *Tulsa World*, Jan. 31, 2018

54 House Bill 1033, Oklahoma House RCS no. 944, Feb. 12, 2018

“After the vote, Majority Floor Leader Rep. Jon Echols told News 4 they are now looking at cuts between \$40-\$60 million in order to balance the remainder of the 2018 budget.”<sup>55</sup>

**13. The OK Republican Platform Caucus called the bill “one of the largest tax increases in Oklahoma history,” adding, “The bills proposed by Step Up Oklahoma represent the largest tax increase in over a generation taking approximately \$704 million dollars from the pockets of hard-working Oklahoma taxpayers”**

1. According to a Feb. 13, 2018, press release from the OK Republican Platform Caucus, “Yesterday, the Oklahoma State Legislature said NO to one of the largest tax increases in Oklahoma history a tax plan proposed by the Oklahoma Step Up Coalition. This tax increase was being advertised as the only way to pay for a classroom teacher pay raise; a statement that simply is not true. There are other options.

“The bills proposed by Step Up Oklahoma represent the largest tax increase in over a generation taking approximately \$704 million dollars from the pockets of hard-working Oklahoma taxpayers to fund a \$280 million teacher pay raise plus \$424 million worth of projects for special interests and government agencies.

“When President Trump pushed through the massive tax reform package less than two months ago, the result was an immediate economic resurgence as businesses and individuals realized they would have more money to invest and spend.”<sup>56</sup>

**14. The bill was the \$581 million cornerstone of a revenue and reform package. Jon Echols directed his ire at the 17 Democrats among the 35 no votes**

1. In a Feb. 12, 2018, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “There will be no second chance for teacher pay raises or additional state revenue, House Speaker Charles McCall, R-Atoka, said late Monday after the failure of House Bill 1033xx, the \$581 million cornerstone of a revenue and reform package promoted by business interests and adopted by GOP leadership.

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55 “Department of Corrections initiates hiring freeze after budget bill fails,” KFOR, Feb. 14, 2018

56 Press Release, “OK Republican Platform Caucus Comments on Failure of Step Up Oklahoma Plan,” Oklahoma Republican Platform Caucus, Feb. 13, 2018

“McCall said he would leave the vote open until midnight, but then he closed the vote at 11:02 p.m. The yes votes had been hung on 63 for more than five hours at the time of McCall’s statement, with 76 needed for passage in the House under the constitution’s supermajority requirement.

“McCall, Majority Leader Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, and representatives from the Step Up Oklahoma coalition, the Oklahoma Education Association and the Oklahoma Public Employees Association met with reporters after 9:30 p.m. and directed their ire at the 17 Democrats among the 35 no votes.”<sup>57</sup>

**15. In 2018, the same year that he pushed tax increases for teacher pay raises, Jon Echols took \$1,000 from the Oklahoma Education Association Fund for Children and Public Education**

1. According to the Oklahoma Ethics Commission, on Oct. 5, 2018, Jon Echols took \$1,000 from the Oklahoma Education Association Fund for Children and Public Education.<sup>58</sup>

**16. In 2017, Jon Echols voted for a bill that would add fees to tickets for professional sporting events, such as Oklahoma City Thunder basketball games**

1. On May 2, 2017, Jon Echols voted for House Bill 2361, a bill regarding fee assessment for professional sporting event tickets (Passed 68-27).<sup>59</sup>
2. In a May 4, 2017, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “The Oklahoma Senate on Thursday passed a measure that would add fees to tickets for professional sporting events, such as Oklahoma City Thunder basketball games.

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<sup>57</sup> Randy Krehbiel, “Step Up Oklahoma revenue plan defeated: 'I fear we have lost an historic opportunity,’” *Tulsa World*, Feb. 12, 2018

<sup>58</sup> Recipient Candidate: Jon Echols, Oklahoma Ethics Commission Electronic Reporting System, Accessed Aug. 8, 2025

<sup>59</sup> House Bill 2361, Oklahoma House RCS no. 706, May 2, 2017

“House Bill 2361, by Rep. Leslie Osborn, R-Mustang, and Sen. Kim David, R-Porter, heads to Gov. Mary Fallin after securing approval in the Senate by a vote of 26-18.

“The measure would add a \$1 fee to tickets under \$50. It would add a \$2 fee to tickets \$50 and higher.”<sup>60</sup>

**17. In 2020, Jon Echols voted for a bill that would effectively allow municipalities to use property taxes to pay for public safety services**

1. On Feb. 13, 2020, Jon Echols voted for H.B. 1992, a bill creating the Oklahoma Public Safety Protection District Act (Passed 76-20).<sup>61</sup>
2. In a Feb. 14, 2020, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “Legislation that effectively allows municipalities to use property taxes to pay for public safety services made it through the Oklahoma House of Representatives on Thursday after years of opposition by tax hawks.

“House Bill 1992, by Rep. Jadine Nollan, R-Sand Springs, gets around current limits on municipal government use of ad valorem revenue by allowing the creation of special taxing districts authorized to assess up to 5 mills in property taxes for police, fire and emergency services.

“Creation of the districts and assessment of the additional tax would require a vote of the people and a 60% majority.

“The last provision was inserted on the floor Thursday to appease opponents, mostly from rural areas. The bill expressly excludes agricultural

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<sup>60</sup> Barbara Hoberock, “Senate passes bill to add fees to professional sporting tickets,” *Tulsa World*, May 4, 2017

<sup>61</sup> House Bill 1992, Oklahoma House RCS no. 970, Feb. 13, 2020

and industrial property, and the districts could not exceed municipal corporate limits.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Randy Krehbiel, “House passes bill that could increase property taxes for public safety districts,” *Tulsa World*, Feb. 14, 2020

## UNCONSTITUTIONAL TAX INCREASE

**18. In 2017, facing an \$878 million budget hole and limited time to fill it, lawmakers, including Jon Echols, worked to raise revenue without actually “raising revenue,” which Echols called, “creativity under the Constitution”**

1. In a May 24, 2017, article, KFOR reported, “Facing an \$878 million budget hole and increasingly limited time to fill it, lawmakers are working to raise revenue without actually ‘raising revenue.’

“What House Minority Leader Scott Inman calls ‘verbal gymnastics’ and Majority Floor Leader Jon Echols calls ‘creativity under the Constitution’ have the two sides wrangling over a series of bills aimed at generating money for the state.”<sup>63</sup>

**19. The Oklahoma Constitution states that “no revenue bill should be passed during the five last days of session.” It also says that no revenue bill can become law without a vote of the people or a three-fourths vote**

1. In a May 24, 2017, article, KFOR reported, “The Oklahoma Constitution states ‘no revenue bill should be passed during the five last days of session.’ It adds, no revenue bill can become law without a vote of the people or a three-fourths vote.

“Yet House Republicans have spent the last several days pushing through legislation that bring in revenue with simple 51-vote majorities.”<sup>64</sup>

**20. Jon Echols on the revenue proposals: “We’re trying to follow both the spirit and the letter of the law of the Oklahoma Constitution”**

1. In a May 24, 2017, article, KFOR reported, “Democrats have been critical of measures to impose a ‘cigarette fee’ and ‘modify incentives’ on oil and gas wells -- delicately-crafted terms intended to sidestep the restrictions in the Constitution.

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63 Lorne Fultonberg, “Are Oklahoma lawmakers following the law on budget?” KFOR, May 24, 2017

64 Lorne Fultonberg, “Are Oklahoma lawmakers following the law on budget?” KFOR, May 24, 2017

“We’re trying to follow both the spirit and the letter of the law of the Oklahoma Constitution,’ Echols told NewsChannel 4. ‘The Oklahoma Supreme Court has defined revenue-raising measures as measures whose primary purpose is to raise revenue or changes in the permanent tax code. Revenue-raising measures have not been when we’ve made changes to exemptions in the tax code.’

“Outside groups have threatened lawsuits over measures they see as unconstitutional.”<sup>65</sup>

**21. *Tulsa World*: “Article 5, Section 33, caused budget-makers to decide a \$1.50 levy on every pack of cigarettes sold in Oklahoma is really a fee, but only after they twice failed to get the 76 House votes needed to pass it as a tax”**

1. In a May 24, 2017, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “Article 5, Section 33 of the Oklahoma Constitution makes legislators say and do strange things.

“On Tuesday, for instance, it caused Rep. Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, to patiently explain why raising the gross production tax on certain oil and gas wells from 1 to 4 percent would not be a tax increase, and would therefore require only 51 votes to pass, but that raising the GPT from 2 to 5 percent on some other wells would a be tax increase and require 76 votes.

“And it caused Rep. Kevin Wallace, R-Wellston, to say House Bill 2429 will net the state \$95.3 million in new gross production taxes but is not a revenue bill, and therefore not subject to Article 5, Section 33's prohibition against the passage of revenue bills in the final five days of a legislative session.

“Article 5, Section 33, caused budget-makers to decide a \$1.50 levy on every pack of cigarettes sold in Oklahoma is really a fee, but only after they twice failed to get the 76 House votes needed to pass it as a tax.

“On Monday, House leadership said raising the personal income tax rate needs 76 votes, but bringing in more than \$100 million by capping itemized deductions requires only 51.”<sup>66</sup>

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65 Lorne Fultonberg, “Are Oklahoma lawmakers following the law on budget?” KFOR, May 24, 2017

66 Randy Krehbiel, “Crafting state budget sometimes requires semantic contortions,” *Tulsa World*, May 24, 2017

**22. After the cigarette revenue bill was passed, a lawsuit was filed, questioning its constitutionality. Senate Bill 845 “flagrantly violates...the Oklahoma Constitution,” attorney Robert McCampbell wrote in a petition to the court**

1. In a June 8, 2017, article, KFOR reported, “With tobacco companies, vendors and smokers ready to take the state to court, lawmakers say they have been bracing for a lawsuit for weeks.

“I don’t know what else to say other than we warned you,’ said Democratic Rep. Forrest Bennett. ‘We wish [Republicans] could have been negotiating in good faith with us so that we could have gotten good solutions before the final week of session but because of their inability to do that, here we are.’

“The last week of session featured bickering at late-night committee meetings, as lawmakers raced to pass a budget in time to avoid a special session.

“One of the bills passed during that time, a \$1.50 per pack fee on cigarettes, is being challenged in the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

“Senate Bill 845 ‘flagrantly violates...the Oklahoma Constitution,’ attorney Robert McCampbell wrote in a petition to the court. ‘SB 845 is the Legislature’s single largest revenue bill of 2017. Yet SB 845 became law even though it originated in the Senate, passed on the final day of the legislative session, and secured bare legislative majorities.’”<sup>67</sup>

**23. In August 2017, the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled that the \$1.50 per pack fee on cigarettes was unconstitutional**

1. In an Aug. 10, 2017, article, KFOR reported, “A measure that was expected to generate more than \$200 million has been ruled unconstitutional.

“The last week of the legislative session featured bickering at late-night committee meetings, as lawmakers raced to pass a budget in time to avoid a special session.

“One of the bills passed during that time, a \$1.50 per pack fee on cigarettes, was just ruled unconstitutional by the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

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<sup>67</sup> Lorne Fultonberg, “I think it was to me just a matter of time:’ Lawmakers unsurprised by tobacco lawsuit,” KFOR, June 8, 2017

“Senate Bill 845 ‘flagrantly violates...the Oklahoma Constitution,’ attorney Robert McCampbell wrote in a petition to the court. ‘SB 845 is the Legislature’s single largest revenue bill of 2017. Yet SB 845 became law even though it originated in the Senate, passed on the final day of the legislative session, and secured bare legislative majorities.’”<sup>68</sup>

**24. The *Oklahoman* called the ruling a “victory for Oklahoma taxpayers,” saying, “it sends a strong message: Lawmakers cannot ignore the constitution or the will of the people merely because they find it politically expedient”**

1. In an Aug. 11, 2017, editorial, the *Oklahoman* wrote, “The Oklahoma Supreme Court sent a deserved rebuke to the Legislature in striking down a cigarette “fee” as an unconstitutionally enacted tax increase.

“The ruling Thursday may complicate state budgeting, but it sends a strong message: Lawmakers cannot ignore the constitution or the will of the people merely because they find it politically expedient.

“We supported passage of a tobacco tax. If you want less of something, tax it more. The tax would drive down smoking rates, if for no other reason than by discouraging people from ever taking up the habit. It would generate additional revenue in a year of significant shortfall, and it would do so in a way that is less economically destructive and counterproductive than many other tax ideas floated.”<sup>69</sup>

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68 “Oklahoma Supreme Court deems ‘cigarette fee’ unconstitutional,” KFOR, Aug. 10, 2017

69 Editorial, “Cigarette ‘fee’ ruling a victory for Oklahoma taxpayers,” *Oklahoman*, Aug. 11, 2017

## TAX INCENTIVES

**25. In 2022, Jon Echols voted for a bill to create the Large-scale Economic Activity and Development Act of 2022. The bill would create a 10-year investment rebate program for the cost of qualified capital expenditures for companies that created new direct jobs**

1. On April 19, 2022, Jon Echols voted for House Bill 4455, creating the Large-scale Economic Activity and Development Act of 2022 (Passed 81-17).<sup>70</sup>
2. In an April 19, 2022, article, KFOR reported, “The Oklahoma House of Representatives voted to advance a bill that would increase tax breaks for companies.

“House Bill 4455, on a fast track as Governor Kevin Stitt works to beat out other states on a deal that could bring tens of thousands of jobs to the Sooner State.

“Now is the time to go after it. Tens of billions of dollars are going to be invested over the next 5 to 7 years in this space, and we want Oklahoma to be the spot that these folks land,’ Gov. Stitt said Monday in a press conference.

“HB4455, if passed into law, would create the Large-scale Economic Activity and Development (LEAD) Act of 2022. Representative Pro-Tem Kyle Hilbert, explaining on the House floor Tuesday that the legislation would give Oklahoma the opportunity, ‘to really be the center of an emerging industry.’

“It’s a great opportunity for our state,’ said Rep. Hilbert. ‘I think many of us as legislators, probably all of us as legislators, Mr. Speaker, campaigned on the need to diversify our economy and grow our economy.’

“Rep. Hilbert explained that the bill would create a 10-year investment rebate program for the cost of qualified capital expenditures for companies that created new direct jobs.”<sup>71</sup>

**26. Up front, Oklahoma would put \$698 million into a fund that would incentivize companies bringing their business to Oklahoma. Although not directly stated,**

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<sup>70</sup> House Bill 4455, Oklahoma House RCS no. 1494, April 19, 2023

<sup>71</sup> Hunter McEachern, “House advances ‘mega deal’ bill touted by Gov. Stitt to incentivize companies moving to Oklahoma,” KFOR, April 19, 2022

**the companies that could be impacted by this potential new law included Panasonic and Canoo**

1. In an April 19, 2022, article, KFOR reported, “Up front, Oklahoma would put \$698 million into a fund that would incentivize companies bringing their business to Oklahoma.

“Although not directly stated, sources have told KFOR that the companies that could be impacted by this potential new law include Panasonic and Canoo.”<sup>72</sup>

**27. In 2025, Canoo, the electric vehicle manufacturer that once promised to employ 2,000 Oklahomans, announced it declared bankruptcy with plans to liquidate all assets**

1. In a Jan. 20, 2025, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “Canoo, the electric vehicle manufacturer that once promised to employ 2,000 Oklahomans, announced Friday night it declared bankruptcy with plans to liquidate all assets.

“The filing, made in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware, will be followed with appointment of a trustee to oversee the liquidation and distribution of proceeds to creditors.

“A news release issued by the company revealed Canoo executives attempted but failed to obtain financial assistance from the U.S Department of Energy's loan program. The company also was unable to strike a deal with foreign investors.

“Canoo CEO Tony Aquila, joined by Gov. Kevin Stitt, first announced in 2021 it was going to open a 400-acre campus at MidAmerica Industrial Park in Pryor.”<sup>73</sup>

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72 Hunter McEachern, “House advances ‘mega deal’ bill touted by Gov. Stitt to incentivize companies moving to Oklahoma,” KFOR, April 19, 2022

73 Steve Lackmeyer and M. Scott Carter, “EV firm Canoo announces its liquidation,” *Oklahoman*, Jan. 20, 2025

**28. Canoo was promised more than \$100 million in state incentives for meeting hiring and performance incentives**

1. In a Jan. 20, 2025, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “Canoo was promised more than \$100 million in state incentives for meeting hiring and performance incentives. The deal was a victory for Stitt on heels of Oklahoma losing a bidding war for Tesla to Texas.”<sup>74</sup>

**29. The company ultimately furloughed and laid off most of its workforce. The impact of the bankruptcy on \$1 million in incentives already provided by Oklahoma was uncertain**

1. In a Jan. 20, 2025, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “The company ultimately furloughed and laid off most of its workforce. The impact of the bankruptcy on \$1 million in incentives already provided by Oklahoma was uncertain Friday night.

“‘We would like to thank the company’s employees for their dedication and hard work,’ Aquila said in the news release. ‘We know that you believed in our company as we did. We are truly disappointed that things turned out as they did.’”<sup>75</sup>

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74 Steve Lackmeyer and M. Scott Carter, “EV firm Canoo announces its liquidation,” *Oklahoman*, Jan. 20, 2025

75 Steve Lackmeyer and M. Scott Carter, “EV firm Canoo announces its liquidation,” *Oklahoman*, Jan. 20, 2025

**30. *Tulsa World* in 2017: Jon Echols was “one of the architects of the special session’s general appropriations bill that cut appropriations and made the state even more dependent on one-time funding gimmicks”**

1. In a Nov. 25, 2017, editorial, the *Tulsa World* wrote, “The constitutionally created citizens panel that sets pay for Oklahoma legislators has voted to reduce lawmakers' salaries by 8.8 percent starting after the 2018 election.

“The pay cut would reduce most legislators' base salary from \$38,400 to \$35,021, although total average compensation is closer to \$62,000 a year after travel and meal reimbursement and health and retirement benefits are considered.”<sup>76</sup>

2. According to the same editorial, “It’s easy to see how it would produce a less diverse, less representative Legislature. If you reduce the pay, you reduce the portion of the population who can afford to take the job. You end up with a chamber filled with the wealthy and the corruptible.

“This is easier for me, because I don’t need my legislative salary, and I don’t run for my legislative salary,” Rep. Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, told reporters after the decision.

“So, if we want more lawmakers like Echols — one of the architects of the special session’s general appropriations bill that cut appropriations and made the state even more dependent on one-time funding gimmicks — by all means, let’s cut their pay.”<sup>77</sup>

**31. In 2017, Jon Echols voted for the so-called “cash-and-cuts” answer to the state’s \$215 million revenue shortfall. The bill included nearly \$60 million worth of spending cuts for the final seven months of the budget year and more than \$100 million in cash pulled from assorted cubbyholes**

1. On Nov. 15, 2017, Jon Echols voted for H.B. 1019, a bill making appropriations to various agencies (Passed 56-38).<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Editorial, “In Legislatures and life, you get what you pay for,” *Tulsa World*, Nov. 25, 2017

<sup>77</sup> Editorial, “In Legislatures and life, you get what you pay for,” *Tulsa World*, Nov. 25, 2017

<sup>78</sup> H.B. 1019, Oklahoma House RCS no. 933, Nov. 15, 2017

2. In a Nov. 15, 2017, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “A budget fix nobody wanted — or will admit to wanting, at any rate — passed the Oklahoma House of Representatives on Wednesday amid recriminations and bitter accusations.

“House Bill 1019, the so-called ‘cash-and-cuts’ answer to the state’s \$215 million revenue shortfall, survived by a 56-38 count and now goes to the Senate, where it is expected to be heard Friday.

“The bill includes nearly \$60 million worth of spending cuts for the final seven months of the budget year and more than \$100 million in cash pulled from assorted cubbyholes. It also depends on the Senate’s passing legislation that immediately eliminates a gross production tax discount that already is set to expire in 18 months.

“The measure on the tax discount passed the House earlier in the ongoing eight-week-long special session.”<sup>79</sup>

**32. At the time of the vote, Gov. Mary Fallin expressed disappointment that lawmakers had been unable to find a solution to “structural issues” in the state budget, saying the unstable situation was harming Oklahoma’s ability to attract new job and investment opportunities**

1. In a Nov. 15, 2017, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “Gov. Mary Fallin expressed disappointment again Wednesday that lawmakers have been unable to find a solution to ‘structural issues’ in the state budget, saying the unstable situation is harming Oklahoma’s ability to attract new job and investment opportunities because it can’t keep teachers and is underfunding vital services.

“‘We are setting Oklahoma up for failure that will take many years to undo the damage we have done to our state’s image,’ she said in a statement.”<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Randy Krehbiel, “House passes ‘cash-and-cuts’ plan to fill state budget hole,” *Tulsa World*, Nov. 15, 2017

<sup>80</sup> Randy Krehbiel, “House passes ‘cash-and-cuts’ plan to fill state budget hole,” *Tulsa World*, Nov. 15, 2017

**33. Gov. Mary Fallin vetoed most of the bill, saying, “Our inability to find a long-term solution to our budget problem puts our citizens and our economy at risk. We cannot give up. We must find solutions”**

1. In a Nov. 17, 2017, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “Gov. Mary Fallin shocked lawmakers late Friday by vetoing most of their fix to the state’s \$215-million revenue shortfall. Her decision, on the same day an eight-week special session of the Legislature adjourned, means they will be summoned back to the Capitol, probably within the next few days.

“Fallin vetoed 165 of 170 sections in House Bill 1019, leaving intact only provisions that temporarily fund the Department of Human Services, the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and the Oklahoma Health Care Authority and keeping the Department of Health solvent through the end of the fiscal year.

“Our inability to find a long-term solution to our budget problem puts our citizens and our economy at risk,” Fallin said in a press release. “We cannot give up. We must find solutions.”<sup>81</sup>

DEI

**34. In 2021, Jon Echols voted for a bill to create the Oklahoma Supplier Diversity Initiative, which would allow for certain minority-owned businesses to be automatically notified of opportunities to do business with the state**

1. On May 6, 2021, Jon Echols voted for House Bill 2365, a bill creating the Oklahoma Supplier Diversity Initiative (Passed 88-4).<sup>82</sup>
2. In an Aug. 7, 2021, article, KOCO reported, “A new Oklahoma law will be opening doors for minority-owned businesses across the state.

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<sup>81</sup> “Gov. Mary Fallin vetoes most of bill that filled hole in state budget,” *Tulsa World*, Nov. 17, 2017

<sup>82</sup> House Bill 2365, Oklahoma RCS no. 909, May 6, 2021

“Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt signed the Supplier Diversity Bill earlier this week. The legislation will allow for certain businesses to be automatically notified of opportunities to do business with the state.

“‘To qualify for the program, they should make less than \$25 million a year and less than 500 employees,’ said David Castillo, chairman of the Board of Governors of the Minority Council.

“Businesses must also be certified either through the Department of Commerce or one of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise certifications allowed by the Small Business Administration.”<sup>83</sup>

**35. In 2023, Jon Echols voted for a bill that updated the Oklahoma Supplier Diversity Initiative, broadening out the definition of who should be supported by the diversity initiative**

1. On April 24, 2023, Jon Echols voted for Senate Bill 119, a bill which would create the Right-to-Start Act (Passed 65-23).<sup>84</sup>
2. In an April 26, 2023, article, KTUL reported, “Senate Bill 119 is an update to the Oklahoma Supplier Diversity Initiative, which connects businesses with government contracts, ensuring those contracts go to businesses from all aspects of society.

“The update broadens out the definition of who should be supported by the diversity initiative.

“Republican Representative Jim Olsen brought up the topic of reverse racism.

‘Democratic Representative Regina Goodwin scoffed at that.

“‘I’m concerned about favoring or disfavoring somebody based on gender or race,’ Olsen said on the House floor. ‘Suppose we had another program and said, “We’re going to give a little bit of an edge to white males. Now we’re

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83 Alejandra Briones, “New law aims to expand opportunities for minority-owned, veteran-owned businesses in state,” KOCO, Aug. 7, 2021

84 Senate Bill 119, Oklahoma House RCS no. 671, April 24, 2023

going to allow everybody to apply, but we're gonna give a little bit of an edge to white males." Would that be okay?"<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Tyler Butler, "Bill to broaden eligibility for Oklahoma Supplier Diversity Initiative stirs up debate," KTUL, April 26, 2023

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**36. In 2024, Jon Echols voted for a bill that would allow survivors of domestic abuse to petition a court for a reduced sentence. The Oklahoma District Attorney's Association maintained that the bill was overly broad and would allow violent offenders to obtain a lighter prison sentence. Gov. Kevin Stitt vetoed the bill and mentioned similar concerns in his veto message**

1. On April 17, 2024, Jon Echols voted for S.B. 1470, a bill creating the Oklahoma Survivors' Act (Passed 84-3).<sup>86</sup>
2. In a May 13, 2024, article, *Oklahoma Watch* reported, "Bills to charge more shoplifting offenses as felonies and mandate lenient prison sentences for domestic violence survivors are in limbo with three weeks to go in the legislative session, but several other criminal justice measures have been signed into law."<sup>87</sup>
3. According to the same article, "The Senate voted overwhelmingly on April 24 to override Stitt's veto of Senate Bill 1470, which would allow survivors of domestic abuse to petition a court for a reduced sentence. The bill also includes a retroactivity clause for individuals already in state custody.

"The measure easily cleared both chambers but faced late opposition from the Oklahoma District Attorney's Association, which maintains the bill is overly broad and would allow violent offenders to obtain a lighter prison sentence. Stitt mentioned similar concerns in his veto message.

"The House has until May 31 to vote on a veto override and enact SB 1470 notwithstanding Stitt's objection. Majority Floor Leader Jon Echols, who has sway in which bills are and aren't heard, is signed on as the bill's House author."<sup>88</sup>

**37. In 2018, Jon Echols voted for a bill that would reduce sentences for repeat nonviolent offenders and prohibit the use of previous convictions for**

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<sup>86</sup> Senate Bill 1470, Oklahoma House of Representatives RCS no. 1569, April 17, 2024

<sup>87</sup> Keaton Ross, "Key criminal justice bills in limbo as session winds down," *Oklahoma Watch*, May 13, 2024

<sup>88</sup> Keaton Ross, "Key criminal justice bills in limbo as session winds down," *Oklahoma Watch*, May 13, 2024

**possession of controlled substances to enhance sentences for subsequent convictions**

1. On April 24, 2018, Jon Echols voted for S.B. 649, a bill regarding crime and punishment; felony offenses; clarifying language; modifying offenses (Passed 84-9).<sup>89</sup>
2. In an April 24, 2018, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “The Oklahoma House of Representatives slogged through a pile of criminal justice reform bills and a pair of contentious school funding measures on Tuesday while Republican leadership cued up a \$7.5 billion general appropriations bill.”<sup>90</sup>
3. According to the same article, “The criminal justice reform measures passed included several that legislators have mulled and massaged for more than a year, and two that are headed to the governor’s desk.

“Those two were SB 649 and SB 689, both sponsored in the House by Rep. Terry O’Donnell, R-Catoosa.

“SB 649 would reduce sentences for repeat nonviolent offenders and prohibit the use of previous convictions for possession of controlled substances to enhance sentences for subsequent convictions.”<sup>91</sup>

**38. In 2018, Jon Echols voted for a bill that would allow offenders sentenced to life without parole for a nonviolent crime to receive a sentence modification after serving 10 years**

1. On April 24, 2018, Jon Echols voted for S.B. 689, a bill regarding criminal procedure; judgments and execution of sentences; sentencing powers of the court (Passed 76-13).<sup>92</sup>

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89 S.B. 649, Oklahoma House RCS no. 1468, April 24, 2018

90 Randy Krehbiel, “Criminal justice reform gets Legislature’s attention,” *Tulsa World*, April 24, 2018

91 Randy Krehbiel, “Criminal justice reform gets Legislature’s attention,” *Tulsa World*, April 24, 2018

92 S.B. 689, Oklahoma House RCS no. 1469, April 24, 2018

2. In an April 24, 2018, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “SB 689 would allow offenders sentenced to life without parole for a nonviolent crime to receive a sentence modification after serving 10 years.

“The bill also allows courts to sentence nonviolent offenders to less than the mandatory minimum, and creates risk and assessment procedures for intervention programs for domestic violence offenders.”<sup>93</sup>

**39. In 2018, Jon Echols worked to retroactively apply a 2017 drug sentencing reform law to earlier felony convictions, saying, “I would have a great deal of interest and would be willing to work on sentencing reform for low-level, nonviolent drug offenders”**

1. In a June 11, 2018, article, the Associated Press reported, “Some Oklahoma lawmakers want to discuss the potential of retroactively applying a 2017 drug sentencing reform law to earlier felony convictions.

“A statewide ballot initiative that reduced the crime of drug possession from a felony to a misdemeanor became a law last year. The law is meant to help stabilize and eventually reduce the number of people going to prison, while focusing the state's efforts on addiction treatment and rehabilitation.

“But the law doesn’t apply retroactively to preceding felony convictions in the drug trade, a point of conflict among criminal justice reformers, district attorneys, lawmakers and incarcerated people, The Oklahoman reported .

“Lawmakers should look at retroactive sentencing and enhanced monitoring programs, said Republican Rep. Jon Echols, the House majority floor leader.

“‘I would have a great deal of interest and would be willing to work on sentencing reform for low-level, nonviolent drug offenders,’ said Echols of Oklahoma City. ‘The people have told us they would like some form of that to take place.’”<sup>94</sup>

**40. Jon Echols said that Oklahoma’s growing prison population had become a fiscal and humanitarian problem**

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<sup>93</sup> Randy Krehbiel, “Criminal justice reform gets Legislature’s attention,” *Tulsa World*, April 24, 2018

<sup>94</sup> “Some push to apply Oklahoma sentencing reform retroactively,” Associated Press, June 11, 2018

1. In a June 11, 2018, article, the Associated Press reported, “Oklahoma’s growing prison population has become a fiscal and humanitarian problem, according to Echols. The Department of Corrections asked for a \$1 billion budget increase this year, partly to help build two new prisons. Lawmakers denied the request, but they may examine a bond issue next year.”<sup>95</sup>

**41. In 2016, voters approved a state question that made certain drug and property crimes misdemeanors instead of felonies. In 2018, Jon Echols filed a bill with Democratic Rep. Jason Dunnington that would make the state question retroactive**

1. In a Dec. 17, 2018, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “Both Republicans and Democrats have identified criminal justice reform as an area for bipartisan cooperation next legislative session, an indication that momentum from voter-approved reforms continues as Oklahoma deals with a nation-leading incarceration rate.

“A bipartisan bill to make sentencing reform measures approved by voters in 2016 retroactive is expected to get a lot of attention during the 2019 session.”<sup>96</sup>

2. According to the same article, “In 2016, voters approved a state question that made certain drug and property crimes misdemeanors instead of felonies.

“Rep. Jason Dunnington, D-Oklahoma City, and House Majority Floor Leader Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, plan to file a bill that would make the state question retroactive.

“Oklahomans have ‘spoken very clearly’ that they’d like lawmakers to find remedies ‘that make sense and that aren’t just punitive to be punitive,’ Dunnington said.

“Oklahomans for Criminal Justice Reform supports making the state question retroactive.”<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> “Some push to apply Oklahoma sentencing reform retroactively,” Associated Press, June 11, 2018

<sup>96</sup> Ben Felder, “Criminal justice reform ‘a very bipartisan issue,’” *Oklahoman*, Dec. 17, 2018

<sup>97</sup> Ben Felder, “Criminal justice reform ‘a very bipartisan issue,’” *Oklahoman*, Dec. 17, 2018

**42. In 2019, Jon Echols filed a bill that could roll back sentences for hundreds or even thousands of low-level offenders by applying the sentencing reform provisions in State Question 780 to those sentenced before SQ 780 became effective on July 1, 2017**

1. In a Jan. 17, 2019, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “One of the Oklahoma House’s highest-ranking Republicans and a Democratic colleague have introduced legislation that could roll back sentences for hundreds or even thousands of low-level offenders.

“House Bill 1269, by representatives Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, and Jason Dunnington, D-Oklahoma City, would apply the sentencing reform provisions in State Question 780 to those sentenced before SQ 780 became effective on July 1, 2017.

“Ryan Gentzler, director of Open Justice Oklahoma, said he estimates 2,500 to 3,000 could be immediately eligible for reduced sentences if HB 1269 were to become law.

“The bill does not have a Senate author, which could become problematic, but state senators Stephanie Bice, R-Oklahoma City, and George Young, D-Oklahoma City, have filed measures addressing the same issue.

“The people of Oklahoma have spoken loud and clear on the issue of criminal justice reform,’ said Echols, the House majority floor leader, in a written statement. “I look forward to working with members of both parties to find not Democratic or Republican solutions, but Oklahoma solutions to the issues facing this state. This bill will be a great step in that direction.”<sup>98</sup>

**43. State Question 780 would reclassify certain low-level offenses, such as drug possession and some property offenses of less than \$1,000, as misdemeanors instead of felonies**

1. In a June 3, 2016, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “Advocates of criminal justice reform submitted signatures on Thursday to the secretary of state in an effort to get a pair of state questions before voters in November.

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98 Randy Krehbiel, “Oklahoma bill would roll back sentences for hundreds or even thousands of nonviolent offenders,” *Tulsa World*, Jan. 17, 2019

“Oklahomans for Criminal Justice Reform, a coalition of community leaders and organizations across the state, submitted more than 220,000 signatures, well above the 65,000 required to qualify for the ballot.

“State Question 780 would reclassify certain low-level offenses, such as drug possession and some property offenses of less than \$1,000, as misdemeanors instead of felonies.

“In Oklahoma, about 17 percent of the people admitted to prisons each year had simple drug possession as their only or most serious offense, said Ryan Kiesel, ACLU of Oklahoma executive director. It was the controlling offense for 10 percent of the prison population, he said.”<sup>99</sup>

**44. Jon Echols’ bill would provide post-conviction relief to Oklahomans who were convicted before the state question passed but who would have been affected had it been in place. Regarding the bill, Jon Echols said, “The people of Oklahoma have spoken loud and clear on the issue of criminal justice reform”**

1. In a Jan. 18, 2019, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “Two Oklahoma City lawmakers introduced bipartisan legislation Thursday to make State Question 780 retroactive. If passed, the bill would affect thousands of criminal sentences. The state question, which Oklahoma voters approved in 2016, reclassified certain drug and property crimes as misdemeanors instead of felonies. It took effect July 1, 2017, but didn't apply retroactively. House Bill 1269, coauthored by Majority Floor Leader Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, and Rep. Jason Dunnington, D-Oklahoma City, would provide post-conviction relief to Oklahomans who were convicted before the state question passed but who would have been affected had it been in place. ‘The people of Oklahoma have spoken loud and clear on the issue of criminal justice reform,’ Echols said in a statement.”<sup>100</sup>

**45. The bill would also allow people to have certain existing felonies expunged from their records**

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<sup>99</sup> Barbara Hoberock, “Criminal justice reform supporters deliver signatures to secretary of state,” *Tulsa World*, June 3, 2016

<sup>100</sup> Darla Slipke, “Lawmakers seek to make State Question 780 retroactive,” *Oklahoman*, Jan. 18, 2019

1. In a May 16, 2019, article, KFOR reported, “The Oklahoma House of Representatives passed a bill Thursday that would help ease prison overcrowding by applying State Question 780 retroactively.

“State Question 780 reclassified some criminal offenses, like drug possession and property crimes, to misdemeanors instead of felonies.

“On Thursday, lawmakers from both sides of the aisle held a joint press conference to discuss the importance of criminal justice reform. They say passing HB 1269 is a step in the right direction.

“We know that Governor Stitt is focused on criminal justice reform, and I think you will see several more pieces of legislation in the future that will try to right the ship and stem incarceration rates in Oklahoma,’ Rep. Sen. Stephanie Bice said.

“The bill would also allow people to have certain existing felonies expunged from their records. This should allow people to get back on their feet.”<sup>101</sup>

**46. In 2019, under the provisions of Jon Echols’ bill, more than 450 prisoners were to be released**

1. According to a Nov. 1, 2019, press release from the Oklahoma House of Representatives, “Oklahoma will shed its status as the No. 1 incarcerator in the nation when more than 450 prisoners are released Nov. 4 under the provisions of House Bill 1269, authored by House Majority Floor Leader Jon Echols (R-Oklahoma City). The action is being called the largest commutation release of prisoners in U.S. history.

“Oklahoma is no longer the nations top incarcerator, Echols said. This historic moment is the clearest proof yet that legislators are listening to the people and acting on criminal justice reform. Oklahoma is going to continue to take smart, practical steps like this one to further reduce our incarceration rate in a responsible manner. Oklahomas prison population has been in a sustained decline for three years now, and we aim to maintain that safe, steady decline well into the future.

“Echols attended today’s Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board meeting during which the prisoners received board recommendations for sentence

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<sup>101</sup> Chase Horn, “Oklahoma House passes criminal justice reform measure to apply state question retroactively,” KFOR, May 16, 2019

commutations under the provisions of HB 1269, which alters simple drug possession and low-level property crime charges. After the meeting, Gov. Kevin Stitt announced he will quickly approve the commutations so the commuted Oklahomans can be released Monday. This move reduces Oklahomas incarceration rate by 1.7%, placing the state in the No. 2 spot for persons incarcerated per capita behind Louisiana and slightly above Mississippi.”<sup>102</sup>

**47. In 2019, Jon Echols voted for a bill that made some significant changes to the cash bail system for misdemeanor and non-violent felony offenses and forbids pre-trial detention for those offenses**

1. On April 25, 2019, Jon Echols voted for Senate Bill 252, a bill regarding the conditions of release of arrested persons; modifying requirements related to bail and personal recognizance (Passed 70-23).<sup>103</sup>

***Editor’s Note:*** Echols voted against the final version of the bill.

2. In an April 26, 2019, article, *Oklahoma Watch* reported, “Senate Bill 252 makes some significant changes to the cash bail system for misdemeanor and non-violent felony offenses and forbids pre-trial detention for those offenses. Criminal justice reform advocates called its passage a ‘home run,’ although it met stiff resistance from the bail bond industry.

“Senate Bill 252 is a critical reform needed to stop jail growth in Oklahoma and move our state out of the No. 1 spot for incarceration,’ said Kris Steele, executive director of Oklahomans for Criminal Justice Reform. ‘For those who support reducing burdensome costs imposed on people involved in the justice system, this bill is a home run.’

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<sup>102</sup> Press Release, “Echols Bill Moves Oklahoma Out Of No. 1 In Incarceration,” Oklahoma House of Representatives, Nov. 1, 2019

<sup>103</sup> Senate Bill 252, Oklahoma House RCS no. 724, April 25, 2019

“The bill passed the House 70-23 Thursday and returns to the Senate for final consideration.”<sup>104</sup>

**48. The bail reform policy would ensure that many people charged with misdemeanors and non-violent felonies were not jailed while they were waiting for their day in court**

1. According to an April 23, 2019, FWD.us, post on Senate Bill 252, “Oklahoma incarcerates more people than any other state in the country. This year, Oklahoma has the opportunity to pass five important reforms that will shed the state of its #1 incarcerating title. One of these bills, SB 252 is a bail reform policy that would ensure many people charged with misdemeanors and non-violent felonies are not jailed while they are waiting for their day in court but, instead, are able to deal with their charges without disrupting their jobs or families.”<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Paul Monies, “Five Questions Surrounding Criminal Justice Reform Bills,” *Oklahoma Watch*, April 26, 2019

<sup>105</sup> Shanna Gong, “5 Reasons Oklahoma Needs Bail Reform Now,” FWD.us, April 23, 2019

## DNA COLLECTION

### **49. In 2016, Jon Echols voted against a bill that would have collected the DNA of people arrested for a felony crime**

1. On March 9, 2016, Jon Echols voted against H.B. 2275, a bill requiring submission of DNA samples from persons arrested for felony crimes (Passed 52-36).<sup>106</sup>
2. In an April 3, 2016, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “People arrested for felony crimes would have their DNA collected under a measure moving through the Legislature.

“The measure passed the Senate Public Safety Committee last week by a vote of 7-1. It heads to the Senate Appropriations Committee for consideration. If approved, it would go to the Senate floor.

“The authors of the measure, House Bill 2275, are Rep. Lee Denney, R-Cushing, and Sen. Clark Jolley, R-Edmond.

“Denney said it is the fourth time she has carried the measure.

“Meeting with families and victims of unsolved crimes prompted her to run the bill. She said the state ought to be using the technology to solve crimes.”<sup>107</sup>

### **50. The head of the ACLU of Oklahoma also opposed the bill, saying it gave law enforcement and the government a license to conduct a fishing expedition**

1. In an April 3, 2016, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “The head of the ACLU of Oklahoma does not like the measure.

“Ryan Kiesel, executive director and a former member of the Oklahoma House, said bills like this give ‘law enforcement and the government a license to conduct a fishing expedition.’

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<sup>106</sup> House Bill 2275, Oklahoma House RCS no. 1158, March 9, 2016

<sup>107</sup> Barbara Hoberock, “Bill would require DNA sample for felony arrests,” *Tulsa World*, April 3, 2016

“Kiesel said supporters of such measures contend that casting a wide net will catch criminals and solve crimes that may otherwise go unprosecuted, but it upsets a delicate balance.

“‘We can’t be entirely safe or entirely free at the same time,’ he said. ‘There has to be a balance. We think bills like this upset that balance.’

“In February, the measure failed the House by a vote of 38-56, but Denney held the bill on a motion to reconsider the vote. It then passed the House by a vote of 52-36.”<sup>108</sup>

**51. Democratic Rep. Eric Proctor voted against the measure, saying, “If someone is guilty, I have no issue with the DNA. But if someone is arrested, in this country you are still innocent until proven guilty”**

1. In an April 3, 2016, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “Rep. Eric Proctor, D-Tulsa, voted against the measure.

“‘If someone is guilty, I have no issue with the DNA. But if someone is arrested, in this country you are still innocent until proven guilty,’ Proctor said. ‘Even though the author says DNA can be expunged, in reality that is not the case. Once it is in the system, it is in the system.’”<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Barbara Hoberock, “Bill would require DNA sample for felony arrests,” *Tulsa World*, April 3, 2016

<sup>109</sup> Barbara Hoberock, “Bill would require DNA sample for felony arrests,” *Tulsa World*, April 3, 2016

## DRUGS

### **52. In 2023, Jon Echols voted with all Democrats against a bill that provided tougher penalties for people with multiple drug convictions**

1. In a May 17, 2023, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “Seven years after Oklahoma voters passed sweeping criminal justice reforms in State Question 780, the state Legislature has walked back some of those reforms for people with multiple drug convictions.

“House Bill 2153 now heads to the governor’s desk for final approval.

“The state referendum made every conviction for simple drug possession a misdemeanor. This legislation, if signed into law, would create a stair-step system of punishment that includes mandatory jail time and optional diversion programs for multiple convictions.

“My main reason for running this bill is to give these individuals with a drug problem the opportunity to get in a drug program to get clean,’ said the bill’s House author, state Rep. Ross Ford, R-Broken Arrow.”<sup>110</sup>

2. According to the same article, “Although the bill passed, it was only by a vote of 57-35, with all Democrats and several Republicans voting against it. State Rep. Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, said he voted against the bill because in his opinion, it went too far against the will of the voters who approved State Question 780.”<sup>111</sup>

### **53. Regarding the bill, Jon Echols said, “I have been committed since I’ve been elected to implement the will of the people, and it was too large of a 780 rollback for me to be comfortable with.” Echols added that both jails and drug treatment programs weren’t adequately funded. Beyond that, Echols said he’d rather see people receive drug addiction and mental health treatment outside of the criminal justice system**

1. In a May 17, 2023, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “If that bill was fentanyl-only, I would have voted yes. Fentanyl is an absolute scourge and it is completely and totally out of control,’ said Echols. ‘I have been committed

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110 Dale Denwalt, “Governor gets tougher drug possession bill,” *Oklahoman*, May 17, 2023

111 Dale Denwalt, “Governor gets tougher drug possession bill,” *Oklahoman*, May 17, 2023

since I've been elected to implement the will of the people, and it was too large of a 780 rollback for me to be comfortable with.'

"Echols added that the bill's House author has good intentions, but he said both jails and drug treatment programs aren't adequately funded. Beyond that, Echols said he'd rather see people receive drug addiction and mental health treatment outside of the criminal justice system."<sup>112</sup>

**54. In 2015, Jon Echols voted against a bill that would require Oklahoma doctors to check a prescription drug database before prescribing certain addictive drugs**

1. On Feb. 9, 2015, Jon Echols voted against H.B. 1948, a bill requiring registrants or staff to access central repository prior to prescribing certain drugs (Passed 64-30).<sup>113</sup>
2. In a March 31, 2015, article, the Associated Press reported, "Doctors in Oklahoma will be required to check a prescription drug database before prescribing certain addictive drugs under a bill signed into law on Tuesday by Gov. Mary Fallin.

"After the Senate voted 35-10 for the bill, Fallin held a hastily called signing ceremony for the measure that has been a priority of hers for several years. It the first bill she has signed this legislative session, and it will take effect Nov. 1.

"The goal of the bill is to stop doctor-shopping in the state of Oklahoma,' Fallin said, referring to the practice of drug seekers going to multiple physicians to acquire prescription narcotics. 'More Oklahomans die from prescription drug overdoses each year than they do from car wrecks in our state.'

"According to statistics from the State Department of Health, Oklahoma's drug overdose rate increased by nearly 400 percent from 1999 to 2013, and the state currently has the sixth-highest unintentional drug overdose death rate in the U.S.

"Under the bill, doctors would have to access the database before prescribing certain highly addictive drugs or refilling prescriptions. The

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<sup>112</sup> Dale Denwalt, "Governor gets tougher drug possession bill," *Oklahoman*, May 17, 2023

<sup>113</sup> House Bill 1948, Oklahoma House RCS no. 15, Feb. 9, 2015

database, which is operated by the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, includes real-time information on whether that patient has obtained prescriptions from another doctor.”<sup>114</sup>

**55. The *Oklahoman* wrote that the bill had “the potential to save lives,” calling it a victory “for those concerned about Oklahoma’s significant prescription drug problem”**

1. In an April 2, 2015, editorial, the *Oklahoman* wrote, “GOV. Mary Fallin on Tuesday signed a bill that has the potential to save lives. It reached her desk a year later than hoped for, and it doesn’t go as far as backers of the original bill had wanted, but it’s a victory nonetheless for those concerned about Oklahoma’s significant prescription drug problem.

“House Bill 1948, by Rep. Doug Cox, R-Grove, and Sen. A.J. Griffin, R-Guthrie, requires doctors to check an online database before prescribing some highly addictive medications. After the law goes into effect Nov. 1, doctors will have to check the database the first time they prescribe for a patient, and then check it every 180 days thereafter.”<sup>115</sup>

**56. Under the bill, doctors would be checking when they prescribed three classes of drugs: opiate painkillers such as oxycodone and hydrocodone, anti-anxiety medications such as Xanax, and carisoprodol, a muscle relaxant that’s marketed as Soma**

1. In an April 2, 2015, editorial, the *Oklahoman* wrote, “They’ll be checking when they prescribe three classes of drugs: opiate painkillers such as oxycodone and hydrocodone, anti-anxiety medications such as Xanax, and carisoprodol, a muscle relaxant that’s marketed as Soma.”<sup>116</sup>

**57. In 2013, there were 788 overdose deaths in Oklahoma, with 593 of those involving at least one prescription drug. H.B. 1948 would help curb the practice of doctor shopping, in which patients go to multiple doctors to get the same drugs**

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<sup>114</sup> Sean Murphy, “Fallin signs Oklahoma prescription drug database bill,” Associated Press, March 31, 2015

<sup>115</sup> Editorial, “Passage of Oklahoma prescription monitoring bill is worth saluting,” *Oklahoman*, April 2, 2015

<sup>116</sup> Editorial, “Passage of Oklahoma prescription monitoring bill is worth saluting,” *Oklahoman*, April 2, 2015

1. In an April 2, 2015, editorial, the *Oklahoman* wrote, “But Oklahoma statistics show how badly needed is some check of the database. In 2013, Oklahoma pharmacies filled 9.6 million prescriptions for controlled dangerous substances. The database was checked 1.5 million times, or about once for every six prescriptions filled.

“In the same year, there were 788 overdose deaths in Oklahoma, with 593 of those involving at least one prescription drug. Oklahoma is among the top 10 nationally for the purchase of all prescription painkillers. The *Oklahoman* has reported extensively on the practice of doctor shopping — patients going to multiple doctors to get the same drugs — and this new law will help to curb that practice.”<sup>117</sup>

- 1. In 2017, Jon Echols voted against a bill that would restore the option of a felony charge for drug possession within 1,000 feet of a school**

1. On March 9, 2017, Jon Echols voted against H.B. 1482, a bill regarding drugs; making certain acts unlawful (Passed 51-38).<sup>118</sup>

2. In a March 10, 2017, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “By the slimmest margin, the Oklahoma House of Representatives decided Thursday that voters might not have fully understood what they were doing when they passed a criminal justice referendum in November.

“With 51 votes, the bare minimum needed, the members passed House Bill 1482, by Rep. Scott Biggs, R-Chickasha, which in its original form took a big hunk out of State Question 780, which reclassified many lesser drug and property felonies as misdemeanors.

“The amended version approved Thursday limited itself to restoring the option of a felony charge for drug possession within 1,000 feet of a school,

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<sup>117</sup> Editorial, “Passage of Oklahoma prescription monitoring bill is worth saluting,” *Oklahoman*, April 2, 2015

<sup>118</sup> House Bill 1482, Oklahoma House RCS no. 188, March 9, 2017

but that was enough to earn the disapproval of the Tulsa Regional Chamber and other pro-reform elements.”<sup>119</sup>

**2. The bill, name the Keep Oklahoma Children Safe from Illegal Drugs Act of 2017, would restore protections for children and the places where they gather, such as schools, daycares and parks**

1. In a Feb. 23, 2017, article, the *Miami News Record* reported, “After State Question 780 was approved in the November election, superintendents are starting to join forces with state representatives are asking for the passage of House Bill 1482 to re-instate drug-free school zone measures.

“HB1482, also cited as the ‘Keep Oklahoma Children Safe from Illegal Drugs Act of 2017,’ would restore protections for children and the places where they gather, such as schools, daycares and parks.

“The bill preserves the portion of state law that makes it a felony to possess drugs within 1,000 feet of a public or private school, public park or within the presence of a child under the age of 12. This crime could still be charged as a misdemeanor, by discretion, and the options for drug court and deferred or suspended sentences could still be utilized.”<sup>120</sup>

**3. In 2020, *Politico* wrote that Jon Echols had “emerged as a key Republican ally of the marijuana industry”**

1. In a Nov. 25, 2020, article, *Politico* reported, “-One day in the early fall of 2018, while scrutinizing the finances of his thriving Colorado garden supply business, Chip Baker noticed a curious development: transportation costs had spiked fivefold. The surge, he quickly determined, was due to huge

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119 Randy Krehbiel, “State House votes to reinstate drug felony that voters axed on November ballot,” *Tulsa World*, March 10, 2017

120 “Superintendents ask for passage of HB1482 to restore drug-free school zones,” *Miami News-Herald*, Feb. 23, 2017

shipments of cultivation supplies-potting soil, grow lights, dehumidifiers, fertilizer, water filters-to Oklahoma.

“Baker, who has been growing weed since he was 13 in Georgia, has cultivated crops in some of the world's most notorious marijuana hotspots, from the forests of Northern California's Emerald Triangle to the lake region of Switzerland to the mountains of Colorado. Oklahoma was not exactly on his radar. So one weekend in October, Baker and his wife Jessica decided to take a drive to see where all their products were ending up.”<sup>121</sup>

2. According to the same article, “But House Majority Leader Jon Echols is adamant that's not in the cards. Echols has also emerged as a key Republican ally of the marijuana industry. (Democrats are largely irrelevant, controlling just 28 out of 149 seats in the House and Senate.) He initially became interested in cannabis policy after discovering that his niece had to travel out of state to obtain CBD products to treat her epileptic seizures.

“It's very, very hard to be deeply rooted in your faith, and still be against something that eases suffering,’ he says.

“Echols was the chief sponsor of one of the country's first CBD legalization bills, way back in 2015, and believes that likely paved the way for Oklahoma's booming medical marijuana program. ‘In other markets where medical marijuana comes in, that might have been their first encounter with the cannabis plant,’ Echols says. ‘Oklahoma had a very mature CBD product market.’

“Echols didn't take a stance on Oklahoma's 2018 medical marijuana referendum, but says he sensed it was going to pass during a Sunday school class when he realized that about half of the participants intended to vote for it.

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<sup>121</sup> “How One of the Reddest States Became the Nation's Hottest Weed Market,” *Politico*, Nov. 25, 2020

“But Echols opposes recreational legalization and is blunt about what he thinks of its prospects at the capital. ‘I think the chances of passing the Legislature are zero percent,’ he says, citing continued wariness about marijuana legalization from a broad swath of GOP lawmakers.”<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> “How One of the Reddest States Became the Nation’s Hottest Weed Market,” *Politico*, Nov. 25, 2020g

## HOUSE DISCIPLINE

### **4. Jon Echols was the longest serving House Majority Floor Leader in Oklahoma history**

1. In a Feb. 26, 2025, article, KOCO reported, “Former Oklahoma lawmaker Jon Echols has announced his campaign for attorney general.

“Echols served in House District 90 from 2012 to 2024, when he termed out of office. The Republican served as the House Majority Floor Leader for eight years, becoming the longest-serving one in Oklahoma history.”<sup>123</sup>

### **5. In 2017, Jon Echols voted to seat Dan Kirby, a Republican lawmaker that had rescinded a letter of resignation he submitted after being named in a sexual harassment complaint**

1. In a Jan. 3, 2017, article, the Associated Press reported, “The Oklahoma House voted along partisan lines Tuesday to seat a Republican lawmaker who rescinded a letter of resignation he submitted after being named in a sexual harassment complaint.

“The GOP-controlled chamber voted to seat Rep. Dan Kirby of Tulsa following a debate between Democrats and Republicans in which Kirby denied the allegations and said he acted too quickly when he submitted a letter of resignation to House Speaker-designate Charles McCall, R-Atoka.”<sup>124</sup>

### **6. Dan Kirby had been named in a sexual harassment complaint by a former legislative assistant that resulted in a \$44,500 settlement. The quietly arranged settlement included a more than \$28,000 payment to the woman and more than \$16,000 to her attorneys**

1. In a Jan. 3, 2017, article, the Associated Press reported, “‘I want to say publicly, and I should have done this from the beginning - I have done nothing wrong,’ Kirby told members of the chamber. ‘I made my decision hastily to resign based upon some pressure, a lot of pressure.’

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<sup>123</sup> Jonathan Greco, “Former Oklahoma lawmaker Jon Echols announces campaign for attorney general,” KOCO, Feb. 26, 2025

<sup>124</sup> Tim Talley, “Oklahoma House seats lawmaker accused of sexual harassment,” Associated Press, Jan. 3. 2017

“Kirby is named in a sexual harassment complaint by a former legislative assistant that resulted in a \$44,500 settlement on Nov. 22. The quietly arranged settlement, first reported by *The Oklahoman*, included a more than \$28,000 payment to the woman and more than \$16,000 to her attorneys.

“The woman contended she was fired without explanation in retaliation for reporting the alleged harassment. But Kirby said he did not fire the woman and that an earlier investigation had produced no evidence of sexual harassment.”<sup>125</sup>

**7. Jon Echols said that he believed Dan Kirby’s resignation letter had no legal authority because it was not presented to Gov. Mary Fallin as required by law**

1. In a Jan. 3, 2017, article, the Associated Press reported, “McCall has asked the House Rules Committee to investigate the circumstances surrounding the payment. But Rep. David Perryman, D-Chickasha, asked that Kirby’s name be excluded from a motion to seat all House members who were elected in the Nov. 8 election and had taken the oath of office. Perryman said there are questions about the legal effect of Kirby’s letter of resignation.

“‘We just want you to delay the seating of a member until those facts are determined,’ Perryman said.

“Majority Floor Leader Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, said he believes Kirby’s resignation letter had no legal authority because it was not presented to Gov. Mary Fallin as required by law.”<sup>126</sup>

**8. Less than two months later, a House panel found Dan Kirby’s behavior so troublesome that it recommended he be expelled by the House**

1. In a Feb. 24, 2017, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “A panel looking into allegations of improper conduct by state Rep. Dan Kirby made no findings on sexual harassment, its chairman says.

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<sup>125</sup> Tim Talley, “Oklahoma House seats lawmaker accused of sexual harassment,” Associated Press, Jan. 3. 2017

<sup>126</sup> Tim Talley, “Oklahoma House seats lawmaker accused of sexual harassment,” Associated Press, Jan. 3. 2017

“Rep. Josh Cockroft, R-Wanette, chaired the House Rules Committee, which ultimately recommended that Kirby be expelled from the lower chamber.

“In a Feb. 20 letter addressed ‘to whom it may concern,’ Cockroft wrote, ‘The committee did not find that Rep. Kirby had committed sexual harassment.’

“But the panel did find his behavior so troublesome that it recommended he be expelled by the House, which would require approval of two-thirds or 69 members. Kirby, R-Tulsa, resigned earlier this month after the committee's recommendations were released.”<sup>127</sup>

**9. Jon Echols said he found Dan Kirby’s behavior so “heinous” and “shocking” that he voted to recommend expulsion**

1. In a Feb. 24, 2017, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “Another member, Rep. Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, said he found Kirby’s behavior so ‘heinous’ and ‘shocking’ that he voted to recommend expulsion.

“All the findings are within the report that was released to the public,’ McCall said. ‘You can look back and look every specific issue, but ultimately the committee did find that the conduct of Rep. Kirby warranted expulsion.’”<sup>128</sup>

**10. In 2023, the Oklahoma House of Representatives officially censured Dean Davis after police released video of his recent arrest on a public intoxication complaint**

1. In a March 29, 2023, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “Dean Davis wasn’t in the House chamber when his colleagues voted overwhelmingly to strip the three-term Oklahoma state representative of his committee assignments.

“The state House of Representatives officially censured Davis after police released video of his recent arrest on a public intoxication complaint. In the video, Davis, R-Broken Arrow, repeatedly told an Oklahoma City police officer that he couldn't be arrested because the legislature is in session.

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127 Barbara Hoberock, “Oklahoma House committee makes no finding of sexual harassment by Rep. Kirby despite pushing expulsion,” *Tulsa World*, Feb. 24, 2017

128 Barbara Hoberock, “Oklahoma House committee makes no finding of sexual harassment by Rep. Kirby despite pushing expulsion,” *Tulsa World*, Feb. 24, 2017

“State law grants members of the Legislature certain privileges that ensure they can participate in the legislative session, including the right to vote on legislation and speak in debate inside the Capitol without fear of arrest. During the arrest last Thursday morning, Davis told an officer ‘you don’t know how bad you messed up’ when he was told to leave the patio of a closed bar.

“The censure motion will prevent Davis from participating in committee work unless he issues a public, written apology to the Oklahoma City Police Department and his fellow lawmakers. He could not be reached for comment Monday after the House vote.

“House Floor Leader Jon Echols said that if a legislator claims a privilege that they are above the law, ‘we won’t put up with it.’

“‘Nobody wants to do this. But what we have to do is show the citizens of the state of Oklahoma that we are not above the law, that we are ordinary public servants, and as a matter of fact, not only are we not above it, we are subject to it more than others,’ Echols said.”<sup>129</sup>

**11. In 2023, State Rep. Ryan Martinez announced he would resign from his legislative seat after he was charged with a felony in connection with a driving under the influence arrest**

1. In an Aug. 19, 2023, article, KOCO reported, “Oklahoma State Rep. Ryan Martinez, R-Edmond, announced Friday he will resign from his legislative seat on Sept. 1.

“Martinez, who serves in the Oklahoma House of Representative’s 39th District, was charged last year with a felony in connection with a driving under the influence arrest. He pleaded guilty this month to a charge of actual physical control of a vehicle while intoxicated.

“‘While I have followed the guidance of my legal counsel and a letter from the Office of the Attorney General, there are differing opinions about whether I should remain in office. My intention has been to resign at the appropriate time to allow a representative to be seated for next year’s legislative session,’

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<sup>129</sup> Dale Denwalt, “House votes 81-9 to censure lawmaker following arrest video,” *Oklahoman*, March 29, 2023

said Martinez in a statement. ‘With such legal uncertainty, I believe now is that time, so that my neighbors can be represented without distraction. I am therefore resigning my position of state representative for House District 39 effective Sept. 1, 2023.’

“He was arrested in late October outside a bar in Edmond. Body camera video showed officers conducting several sobriety tests before he was taken into custody.”<sup>130</sup>

**12. In March 2023, the Oklahoma House censured Rep. Dean Davis, who had been arrested on a public intoxication charge in Oklahoma City’s Bricktown area. On police body camera video, Davis was seen and heard arguing that he couldn’t be detained because he was a legislator**

1. In a March 27, 2023, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “The Oklahoma House of Representatives issued its second censure of the session on Monday, this time with Republican leadership coming down on one of its own members, Rep. Dean Davis, R-Broken Arrow.

“Davis was arrested on a public intoxication charge in Oklahoma City's Bricktown area in the wee hours of Thursday morning. On police body camera video, Davis can be seen and heard arguing that he can’t be detained because he’s a legislator.”<sup>131</sup>

2. According to the same article, “Leadership took some criticism for Turner’s censure, particularly in light of the fact that two Republican members Rep. Terry O'Donnell, R-Catoosa, and Rep. Ryan Martinez, R-Edmond are facing felony charges and were not censured.

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130 “Felony charge filed against Oklahoma state representative following DUI arrest,” KOCO, Dec. 29, 2022

131 Randy Krehbiel, “Oklahoma House censures Broken Arrow rep arrested on public intoxication charge,” *Tulsa World*, March 27, 2023

“On Monday, Moore and Majority Leader Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, said pointedly that Davis' censure squares things.

“In my prior motion, I stated that the consequence proposed would be the very consequence, regardless of the name of the member, and this settles any argument for debate to the contrary,’ said Moore, who also brought the censure motion against Turner.

“Echols said legislators must not abuse their positions.

“O’Donnell is charged with using his position to keep a Catoosa tag agency within his wife's family, and Martinez, according to a police report, tried to get police to call Gov. Kevin Stitt when Martinez was being arrested for alleged DUI.”<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Randy Krehbiel, “Oklahoma House censures Broken Arrow rep arrested on public intoxication charge,” *Tulsa World*, March 27, 2023

**13. In 2023, Jon Echols endorsed Ron DeSantis for president**

1. In a June 8, 2023, article, News on 6 reported, “A group backing the presidential campaign of Ron DeSantis says 20 Oklahoma Legislators are now endorsing the Republican Florida Governor.

“The ‘Never Back Down’ group says among them are Majority Floor Leader Jon Echols, Deputy Majority Leader Trey Caldwell and Deputy Floor Leader John Pfeiffer.”<sup>133</sup>

**14. In July 2024, following the assassination attempt of Donald Trump, Jon Echols said, “There has to be a recognition that every increasing rise and violent rhetoric and I will say from the right and the left but the ever-increasing rise in violent rhetoric has led to this”**

1. In a July 14, 2024, article, News on 6 reported, “News on 6 heard from an Oklahoma representative in Milwaukee for the Republican National Convention.

“All eyes are on security after this weekend's attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump.

“Oklahoma House Majority Floor Leader, Jon Echols says there are feelings of frustration, anger, and unease. He also says there is optimism around the event.

“While we don’t know yet the motive behind the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump, Oklahoma Representative Echols says it's time for everyone to dial back heated rhetoric.

“‘There has to be a recognition that every increasing rise and violent rhetoric and I will say from the right and the left but the ever-increasing rise in violent rhetoric has led to this.’ Said Echols.”<sup>134</sup>

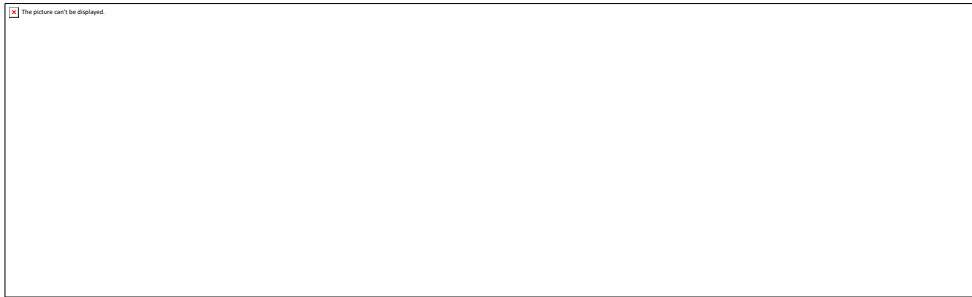
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133 “20 Oklahoma Legislators Endorsing Ron DeSantis, According To Group Backing His Campaign,” News on 6, June 8, 2023

134 Chloe Abbott, “Oklahoma House Majority Floor Leader, Jon Echols Says There Are Feelings Of Frustration, Anger, And Unease Ahead Of RNC,” News on 6, July 14, 2024

**15. Jon Echols re-tweeted a Jan. 6, 2021, Mike Pence post that read, “Peaceful protest is the right of every American but this attack on our Capitol will not be tolerated and those involved will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law”**

1. According to his archived Twitter profile, Jon Echols retweeted a Jan. 6, 2021, post from Mike Pence that read, “Peaceful protest is the right of every American but this attack on our Capitol will not be tolerated and those involved will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”<sup>135</sup>



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<sup>135</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20210219194706/twitter.com/jonechols>

SPECIAL INTEREST MONEY

**16. Jon Echols has taken more than \$600,000 in special interest money**

1. According to the Oklahoma Ethics Commission, Jon Echols has taken at least \$619,495 in campaign money from PACs, Tribes and unions.<sup>136</sup>

**Editor's Note:** For a full list of Jon Echols' PAC donors, please contact Cascade Strategies.

**17. Jon Echols has taken at least \$20,000 from Citizens for Justice, the offshoot PAC of the Oklahoma Association for Justice, Oklahoma's trial lawyers association**

1. According to the Oklahoma Ethics Commission, Jon Echols has taken the following contributions from Citizens for Justice.<sup>137</sup>

Donor	Date	Amount
Citizens for Justice	05/26/2018	\$5,000
Citizens for Justice	09/22/2020	\$5,000
Citizens for Justice	12/17/2021	\$5,000
Citizens for Justice	03/31/2025	\$5,000

**18. The Citizens for Justice PAC is an offshoot of the Oklahoma Association for Justice, and whose goal is to elect lawmakers who support the right to a jury trial for civil cases**

1. In an Oct. 17, 2018, article, the *Journal Record* reported, "A large chunk of Oklahoma's legislative seats will be up for grabs during the November vote, and a swath of the legal community has been gearing up for the change.

"The Citizens for Justice Political Action Committee is one of the top 10 PACs that have contributed to campaigns so far this year, coming in at sixth place with nearly \$200,000 in contributions, according to Oklahoma Ethics Commission data. Most of that money was spent during the primaries.

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<sup>136</sup> Recipient Candidate: Jon Echols, Oklahoma Ethics Commission Electronic Reporting System, Accessed Aug. 8, 2025

<sup>137</sup> Recipient Candidate: Jon Echols, Oklahoma Ethics Commission Electronic Reporting System, Accessed Aug. 8, 2025

“The committee’s goal is to elect lawmakers who support the right to a jury trial for civil cases. It’s an offshoot of the Oklahoma Association for Justice, which has been representing Oklahoma civil attorneys for decades. The committee’s website reminds visitors that the Legislature will have 25-30 open seats in the Legislature during the 2018 elections because of term limits.”<sup>138</sup>

**19. Jon Echols has taken at least \$3,750 from Johnson & Johnson PAC**

1. According to the Oklahoma Ethics Commission, Jon Echols has taken the following contributions from Johnson & Johnson PAC.<sup>139</sup>

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Johnson & Johnson PAC	09/20/2016	\$500
Johnson & Johnson PAC	06/21/2018	\$1,000
Johnson & Johnson PAC	09/30/2018	\$500
Johnson & Johnson PAC	10/01/2020	\$1,000
Johnson & Johnson PAC	10/24/2022	\$750

**20. In 2019, a judge in Oklahoma ruled that Johnson & Johnson had intentionally played down the dangers and oversold the benefits of opioids**

1. In an Aug. 26, 2019, article, the *New York Times* reported, “A judge in Oklahoma on Monday ruled that Johnson & Johnson had intentionally played down the dangers and oversold the benefits of opioids, and ordered it to pay the state \$572 million in the first trial of a drug manufacturer for the destruction wrought by prescription painkillers.

“The amount fell far short of the \$17 billion judgment that Oklahoma had sought to pay for addiction treatment, drug courts and other services it said it

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<sup>138</sup> Catherine Sweeney, “Lawyers PAC among top campaign contributors,” *Journal Record*, Oct. 17, 2018

<sup>139</sup> Recipient Candidate: Jon Echols, Oklahoma Ethics Commission Electronic Reporting System, Accessed Aug. 8, 2025

would need over the next 20 years to repair the damage done by the opioid epidemic.”<sup>140</sup>

**21. In November 2021, the Oklahoma State Supreme Court ruled in favor of Johnson & Johnson in overturning the trial court’s \$465 million judgment in 2019**

1. According to a Nov. 9, 2021, press release from Johnson & Johnson, “The Oklahoma State Supreme Court today ruled in favor of Johnson & Johnson and its U.S.-based Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies in overturning the trial court’s \$465 million judgment in 2019 .

“The Court appropriately and categorically rejected the misguided and unprecedented expansion of the public nuisance law as a means to regulate the manufacture, marketing, and sale of products, including the Company’s prescription opioid medications.

“We recognize the opioid crisis is a tremendously complex public health issue, and we have deep sympathy for everyone affected. The Company’s actions relating to the marketing and promotion of these important prescription opioid medications were appropriate and responsible. The Company no longer sells prescription opioid medications in the United States as part of our ongoing efforts to focus on transformational innovation and serving unmet patient needs.”<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Jan Hoffman, “Johnson & Johnson Ordered to Pay \$572 Million in Landmark Opioid Trial,” New York Times, Aug. 26, 2019

<sup>141</sup> Press Release, “Oklahoma State Supreme Court Rules in Favor of Johnson & Johnson in Opioid Litigation,” Johnson & Johnson, Nov. 9, 2021

## LOBBYISTS

### 22. Jon Echols has taken more than \$30,000 in gifts and meals from lobbyists

1. According to the Oklahoma Ethics Commission, Jon Echols has taken the following meals and gifts from lobbyists during his time in the Oklahoma House of Representatives.<sup>142</sup>

Year	Total Meals & Gifts Received
2025	\$53.00
2024	\$2,928.12
2023	\$2,854.86
2022	\$3,575.44
2021	\$2,378.46
2020	\$2,225.94
2019	\$2,999.11
2018	\$2,196.33
2017	\$3,472.00
2016	\$3,442.86
2015	\$2,534.71
2013	\$1,541.00

### 23. As a freshman lawmaker, Jon Echols received the most gifts from lobbyists in his first six months in office

1. In an Aug. 4, 2013, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “A freshman lawmaker who handled two key pieces of legislation, including a measure that drastically changed how Oklahomans are compensated for on-the-job injuries, received the most gifts from lobbyists so far this year, reports filed with the state Ethics Commission show.

“The \$1,541 that Rep. Jon Echols received in gifts from lobbyists is about \$115 more than the leader of the Senate received for the first six months of this year.”<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Lobbyist/Lobbyist Principals Expenditure Overall Total by Recipient: Echols, Oklahoma Ethics Commission website, Accessed Aug. 27, 2025

<sup>143</sup> Michael McNutt, “Freshman Oklahoma lawmaker top recipient of lobbyist attention,” *Oklahoman*, Aug. 4, 2013

**24. Jon Echols said he expected that he would be among the top lawmakers receiving gifts from lawmakers because of his work on Senate Bill 1062, a bill that drastically changed how Oklahomans are compensated for on-the-job injuries**

1. In an Aug. 4, 2013, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “Echols, R-Oklahoma City, said he expected he would be among the top lawmakers receiving gifts from lawmakers because of his work on Senate Bill 1062. He presented the rewritten 284-page measure in a House of Representatives committee and helped present it on the House floor.”<sup>144</sup>

**25. In 2019, Jon Echols took nearly \$2,900 in meals from lobbyists**

1. In a Jan. 19, 2020, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “Lobbyists spent more than \$600,000 buying meals for Oklahoma legislators and other public officials last year, treating them to steak dinners, sack lunches and breakfast buffets on behalf of clients seeking to influence public policy.

“Nearly all of the meals were bought in a four-month period: the legislative session that began in February and ended in late May. However, the meals continued after the session in Oklahoma and other states, including Texas, where Gov. Kevin Stitt and some legislators ate at AT&T’s expense before the Red River showdown.”<sup>145</sup>

2. According to the same article, “Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat, of Oklahoma City, received nearly \$3,000 worth of lobbyist-paid meals in 2019, while House Majority Leader Jon Echols, of Oklahoma City, received nearly \$2,900 in meals.”<sup>146</sup>

**26. In 2016, Jon Echols took more than \$3,400 in meals and gifts from lobbyists**

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144 Michael McNutt, “Freshman Oklahoma lawmaker top recipient of lobbyist attention,” *Oklahoman*, Aug. 4, 2013

145 Chris Casteel, “Dining on steak dinners to sack lunches: Lobbyists pay over \$600,000 to feed lawmakers, public officials in 2019,” *Oklahoman*, Jan. 19, 2020

146 Chris Casteel, “Dining on steak dinners to sack lunches: Lobbyists pay over \$600,000 to feed lawmakers, public officials in 2019,” *Oklahoman*, Jan. 19, 2020

1. In a Feb. 5, 2017, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “To the public, influence at the state Capitol may seem to come down to who hands out the most campaign cash and hires the most lobbyists.

“And why wouldn’t Oklahomans have that impression? More than 540 registered lobbyists — almost four for every lawmaker — are registered with the state’s Ethics Commission, and about \$15 million was spent deciding 125 legislative seats, seven state questions and an uncontested Corporation Commission seat.

“In practice, though, a host of factors play into determining what pieces of legislation make it into law and which are kicked to the curb.”<sup>147</sup>

2. According to the same article, Jon Echols took \$3,442.86 in meals and gifts from lobbyists in 2016.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Barbara Hoberock and Randy Krehbiel, “Capitol influence: Lobbyists need more than money to succeed at state Capitol,” *Tulsa World*, Feb. 5, 2017

<sup>148</sup> Barbara Hoberock and Randy Krehbiel, “Capitol influence: Lobbyists need more than money to succeed at state Capitol,” *Tulsa World*, Feb. 5, 2017

## PAYDAY LOANS

### **27. In 2017, Jon Echols voted for a bill that could allow annualized interest of up to 204 percent on some small payday loans**

1. On March 13, 2017, Jon Echols voted for H.B. 1913, a bill creating the Small Loan Act (Passed 59-31).<sup>149</sup>
2. In a March 14, 2017, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “A bill that could allow annualized interest of up to 204 percent on some small loans made it through the Oklahoma House of Representatives on Monday despite the opposition of some religious groups and advocacy organizations and a less-than-glowing recommendation from its author.

“‘I don’t like this type of loan any more than you do,’ Rep. Chris Kannady, R-Oklahoma City, told the other members as he summed up House Bill 1913.

“But, Kannady said, the bill is an improvement on current law and better than sending desperate borrowers to unregulated loan sharks.

“Several members, for and against HB 1913, related their own experiences with payday loans.

“Representatives Kevin McDugle, R-Coweta, and Casey Murdock, R-Felt, said the loans helped them get through difficult times in their lives.

“Rep. Cyndi Munson, D-Oklahoma City, said her father struggled for years to pay off high-interest loans he took out while raising her and her sister. ‘I’m telling you from personal experience,’ said Rep. Jason Lowe, D-Oklahoma City, ‘the (payday loan industry) creates a cycle of dependency.’”<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> House Bill 1913, Oklahoma House RCS no. 208, March 13, 2017

<sup>150</sup> Randy Krehbiel, “Oklahoma House advances payday loan bill,” *Tulsa World*, March 14, 2017

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

**28. In February 2020, a bill that would have allowed a law enforcement officer to stop any person they “reasonably suspected” had committed or was about to commit a crime passed the House Judiciary Committee, but Jon Echols said the bill would not advance to the House floor**

1. In a Feb. 16, 2020, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “A controversial bill some people feared would have allowed Oklahoma law enforcement to carry out ‘stop and frisk’ type policies is dead for this legislative session.

“House Bill 3359 by Rep. David Smith, R-McAlester, passed the House Judiciary Committee, but will not advance to the floor of the chamber, House Majority Floor Leader Jon Echols said.”<sup>151</sup>

“The legislation would have allowed a law enforcement officer to stop any person they ‘reasonably suspect’ has committed or is about to commit a crime. The officer could ask the person to explain their actions and provide their name, address and photo identification. If an officer was not satisfied with the responses, the person could be subject to additional questioning or detention.”<sup>152</sup>

**29. After Jon Echols stopped the bill from being heard on the floor, the bill’s sponsor backed away from the bill after it raised “stop and frisk” concerns. The sponsor called his bill an atrocity after it raised concerns over its constitutionality**

1. In a Feb. 21, 2020, article, the *McAlester News-Capital* reported, “A representative called a bill he authored an atrocity after it raised concerns over its constitutionality.

“District 18 Representative David Smith, R-McAlester, said he authored House Bill 3359 with the intent to crack down on crime -- but backed away from the bill after it raised ‘stop and frisk’ concerns and passed with an amendment through the House Judiciary Committee this week. Smith called

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<sup>151</sup> Carmen Forman, “Bill reminiscent of ‘stop and frisk’ declared dead,” *Oklahoman*, Feb. 16, 2020

<sup>152</sup> Carmen Forman, “Bill reminiscent of ‘stop and frisk’ declared dead,” *Oklahoman*, Feb. 16, 2020

the bill a mistake and House Majority Leader Jon Echols reportedly stopped the bill from being heard on the floor.

“I buried that bill; I cremated that bill,’ Smith said. ‘I couldn’t get it any deader if I tried. It was an atrocity.’

“The bill, if passed, would have allowed law enforcement officers to stop anyone they suspect of breaking the law -- or if the officers think a person is about to commit a crime.

“A peace officer may stop any person who the peace officer reasonably suspects is committing, has committed or is about to commit a violation of the criminal laws of this state or the criminal ordinances of a municipality and may require the person to give his or her name and address, photo identification, if available, and an explanation of his or her actions,’ the bill states.

“A portion of the bill allowed officers to demand the suspect to explain their action, but it was removed at the recommendation of Chairman Chris Kannady, R-Oklahoma City. Smith said law enforcement officers requested the legislation.”<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Adrian O’Hanlon, “State representative backtracks on his own bill after ‘stop and frisk’ concerns,” *McAlester News-Capital*, Feb. 21, 2020

## SCHOOL CHOICE

### **30. In 2023, the Oklahoma House passed the senate’s school choice tax credit plan, but used a procedural move to prevent it from moving to the governor’s desk**

1. In a May 2, 2023, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “The Oklahoma House has tentatively agreed to the Senate’s school choice tax credit plan, but an unusual procedural move is keeping it from moving to the governor’s desk for signature.

“The bill, which started out in the House and was amended by the Senate, gives parents a tax credit for sending their children to a private school or educating them at home.

“The unusual part came immediately after the vote when House Speaker Charles McCall ‘captured’ the bill indefinitely by announcing he might ask the chamber to vote on the measure again. That means it cannot be sent to the governor for his signature until the speaker releases it.

“That parliamentary action is normally used when a vote fails. When that happens, lawmakers have a three-day window to convince their colleagues to change their vote. But the House suspended the three-day rule for this legislation, meaning that McCall himself can hold onto the bill as a bargaining chip to get something else.”<sup>154</sup>

### **31. Regarding the move, Jon Echols said that the House wanted senators to adopt additional funding for rural schools, which had been a sticking point in negotiations**

1. In a May 2, 2023, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “Floor Leader Jon Echols indicated that the House wants senators to adopt additional funding for rural schools, which has been a sticking point in negotiations. Rural lawmakers have criticized school choice bills because private schools are rare outside of urban areas.

“We’re saying, “Fine, you get the tax credit you want.” Now come to the table and start talking about what we’re going to do for rural Oklahoma in exchange

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<sup>154</sup> Dale Denwalt, “Oklahoma House passes school choice tax credit, but holds on to it as bargaining chip,” *Oklahoman*, May 2, 2023

for it,' Echols said. 'After today's vote, there is one single solitary issue left to negotiate in this building, and there is one body saying something has to be in this for rural Oklahoma.'"155

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155 Dale Denwalt, "Oklahoma House passes school choice tax credit, but holds on to it as bargaining chip," *Oklahoman*, May 2, 2023

## SECOND AMENDMENT

### **32. In January 2020, Jon Echols said that as long as he was floor leader, a guns on campus bill would not hit the floor of the Oklahoma House of Representatives**

1. In a Jan. 31, 2020, article, the *Oklahoman* reported, “Republican leadership in the Oklahoma Legislature have assured Oklahoma City’s business community that a proposed campus carry bill won’t make it far this year.

“Senate Bill 1567 would allow anyone with a valid handgun license to carry a concealed handgun while on a university, college or CareerTech campus. The bill would allow schools to prohibit concealed handguns at events, including sports games.

“State Rep. Jon Echols, the Republican who controls the flow of bills and the House daily agenda, expressed clear opposition Thursday during a panel discussion for the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce.

“As long as I’m floor leader, we will not have the guns on campus bill hit the floor of the Oklahoma House of Representatives,” said Echols, R-Oklahoma City.”<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Dale Denwalt, “‘Campus carry’ bill won’t get far, GOP leaders say,” *Oklahoman*, Jan. 31, 2020

**33. In 2024, while Jon Echols was House Majority Floor Leader, three anti-LGBTQ bills were sidelined for the session. One bill would have prohibited the use of state funds in any way connected to Pride Month and would also have banned the display on state property of the gay pride flag or any flag “that represents sexual orientation or gender identity.” Another bill would have barred alteration of birth certificates’ gender identification. The third bill targeted sex education in schools, including discussion of gender identification and sexuality**

1. In a March 15, 2024, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “Three bills considered particularly egregious to LGBTQ+ Oklahomans and their supporters missed a Thursday legislative deadline and appear to be sidelined for the remainder of the legislative session.

“House Bill 3217, titled the Patriotism Instead of Pride Act, and HB 3219, both by Rep. Kevin West, R-Moore, and HB 3120, by Rep. Danny Williams, R-Seminole, were among several hundred bills to go dormant because the House of Representatives did not vote on them by adjournment Thursday afternoon.

“HB 3217 would have prohibited the use of state funds in any way connected to what is commonly called Gay Pride, or just Pride, Month. The bill would also have banned the display on state property of the gay pride flag or any flag ‘that represents sexual orientation or gender identity.’

“HB 3219 would have barred alteration of birth certificates’ gender identification.

“HB 3120 targeted sex education in schools, including discussion of gender identification and sexuality.”<sup>157</sup>

**34. The decision to shelve the bills was made the same day as a demonstration at the Capitol concerning the death of nonbinary teen Nex Benedict. According to a summary autopsy report, Benedict committed suicide one day after a fight in an Owasso High School bathroom resulted in Benedict going to a hospital emergency room**

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157 Randy Krehbiel, “Bill targeting gay pride flags among LGBTQ+-related measures sidelined at Oklahoma Capitol,” *Tulsa World*, March 15, 2024

1. In a March 15, 2024, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “The decision to shelve the bills was made the same day as a demonstration at the Capitol concerning the death of nonbinary teen Nex Benedict. According to a summary autopsy report, Benedict committed suicide one day after a fight in an Owasso High School bathroom resulted in Benedict going to a hospital emergency room.”<sup>158</sup>

**35. Jon Echols was one of eight Republican representatives that signed a letter concerning Benedict’s death, which stated, “Every human life is precious and created in the image of God regardless of who they are or who they love. We call on all Oklahomans to join us in our commitment to being respectful and deliberate in our language”**

1. In a March 15, 2024, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “Thursday afternoon, eight Republican House members issued a joint statement concerning Benedict's death:

“The tragic suicide of Nex Benedict is a harsh reminder of the power that words have,’ the statement said. ‘As public officials and policy makers, we have a sacred obligation to ensure that as we do the work of the people, we do so with respect and dignity. Every human life is precious and created in the image of God regardless of who they are or who they love. We call on all Oklahomans to join us in our commitment to being respectful and deliberate in our language.’

“It was signed by Reps. Marcus McEntire, R-Duncan; Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City; Jeff Boatman, R-Tulsa; Mike Osburn, R-Edmond; Mark McBride, R-Moore; Tammy West, R-Oklahoma City; Mark Vancuren, R-Owasso; and Lonnie Sims, R-Jenks.”<sup>159</sup>

**1. In 2023, while Jon Echols was floor leader in the Oklahoma House, a bill aimed at banning drag performances in public places stalled in the House**

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<sup>158</sup> Randy Krehbiel, “Bill targeting gay pride flags among LGBTQ+-related measures sidelined at Oklahoma Capitol,” *Tulsa World*, March 15, 2024

<sup>159</sup> Randy Krehbiel, “Bill targeting gay pride flags among LGBTQ+-related measures sidelined at Oklahoma Capitol,” *Tulsa World*, March 15, 2024

1. In a May 27, 2023, article, the *Tulsa World* reported, “The Oklahoma Legislature completed its regular legislative session on Friday after sending hundreds of bills to the governor’s desk.

“Over the past four months at the state Capitol, lawmakers passed a record \$12.9 billion budget and approved a ‘historic’ education package, but momentum on some controversial and closely watched policy issues petered out before the end of session.

“Some of Gov. Kevin Stitt’s priorities fell to the wayside, and some culture war issues that grabbed headlines failed to gain traction as the session progressed.”<sup>160</sup>

2. According to the same article, “Controversial bills aimed at banning drag performances in public places stalled in the House and Senate this year but could be revived in the 2024 legislative session.

“While many GOP-led state legislatures have advanced bans on drag shows, bills banning ‘adult cabaret’ performances, drag queen story hours and ‘lewd acts’ in public places stalled in the Oklahoma Legislature.

“The bills drew significant opposition from the the LGBTQ community and from groups such as the Oklahoma City Pride Alliance, which said drag performers help make OKC PrideFest possible. A crowd of people, including some local drag queens, protested the bills at the Capitol earlier this session.

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<sup>160</sup> Carmen Forman, “A look at what Oklahoma lawmakers didn’t pass this year,” *Tulsa World*, May 27, 2023

“However, the Legislature passed and Stitt signed into law legislation that bans gender-affirming surgery and drug treatments for minors. That law is being challenged in court.”<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Carmen Forman, “A look at what Oklahoma lawmakers didn’t pass this year,” *Tulsa World*, May 27, 2023

## IMMIGRATION

### **2. In 2017, Jon Echols opposed a proposal that would have looked at the tens of thousands of students in Oklahoma who didn't speak English and then turned them over to ICE to see if they truly were citizens. Echols called the proposal, "a bad idea"**

1. In a May 12, 2017, article, CNN reported, "Fellow Republicans are distancing themselves from an Oklahoma lawmaker's proposed solution to state budget problems: turning kids who are learning English over to immigration authorities.

"An idea that state Rep. Mike Ritze floated this week in an interview with a local news station drew swift rebukes from members of his own party. It spurred sharp criticism from immigrant rights advocates. And it inspired a flurry of negative comments on his Facebook page.

"The state's top school official, who's also a Republican, quickly decried the idea.

"We shouldn't try to fix the budget hole by threatening children,' Oklahoma state schools Superintendent Joy Hofmeister said on Twitter. 'We are better than that.'

"Rep. Jon Echols, the state House majority leader, told CNN on Friday that targeting students taking English as a Second Language (ESL) classes isn't the right approach.

"It's a bad idea,' he said.

"The proposal

"Ritze, a doctor from the Tulsa suburb of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, told KWTW this week that he and a group of Republican lawmakers had come up with a number of ways to fill a hole in their state's budget without raising taxes.

"One way to save \$60 million, he said, would be looking at the tens of thousands of students in the state who don't speak English.

“Identify them and then turn them over to ICE to see if they truly are citizens,’ Ritze said. “Do we really have to educate non-citizens?”<sup>162</sup>

**3. Jon Echols: “I have no desire to target (English as a second language) students. That’s a bad idea”**

1. In a May 11, 2017, article, the Associated Press reported, “A Republican member in the Oklahoma House is suggesting that tens of thousands of non-English speaking students in public schools be turned over to U.S. immigration officials as cost-saving measure in the cash-strapped state.

“Broken Arrow Republican Rep. Mike Ritze told News9 in an interview Wednesday that the newly created Republican Platform Caucus believes the state could save \$60 million if Oklahoma would identify what the caucus believes is 82,000 non-English speaking students ‘and then turn them over’ to Immigration and Customs Enforcement to determine whether they are citizens.”<sup>163</sup>

2. According to the same article, “House Floor Leader Rep. Jon Echols also downplayed Ritze’s idea.

“‘I have no desire to target (English as a second language) students,’ said Echols, a Republican from Oklahoma City. ‘That’s a bad idea.’

“Ryan Kiesel, who heads the American Civil Liberties Union of Oklahoma, described the caucus’ suggestion as ‘disgustingly inhumane.’”<sup>164</sup>

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162 Catherine Shoichet, “Republicans rebuke Oklahoma rep's proposal to turn kids over to ICE,” CNN, May 12, 2017

163 Sean Murphy, “Lawmaker: Vet citizenship of non-English-speaking schoolkids,” Associated Press, May 11, 2017

164 Sean Murphy, “Lawmaker: Vet citizenship of non-English-speaking schoolkids,” Associated Press, May 11, 2017

