

Blue on red: After standing back and watching the Oklahoma Republican Party's internal fights over the past year, the Democratic Party weighed in with an attack on state

GOP Chairman John Bennett headlined "Family Values' Republicans Working to Destroy Oklahoma Families."

fire-breathing Bennett has directed his flames at other Republicans as much as Democrats during

his self-styled purge of "RINOs" from the party. Those seem to include Muslims, Middle

East refugees, illegal immigrants and anyone with a nontraditional sexuality or gender identification. "Clearly,

this man is stuck in a period of time that has long since passed,"

said Oklahoma Democratic Party Chairwoman Alicia Andrews. "His assault on LGBTQIA2 persons in our

state shows just how out of touch the Republican Party has become." Andrews said

Bennett's concept of America "indicates that he either does not understand American history or

is simply choosing to rewrite it to conform to his own biases." Oiled up:

Members of Oklahoma's congressional delegation voiced dismay at the Biden administration dumping 50 million

barrels from the nation's strategic oil reserve onto the market. Although the same members

have in recent months chided Biden for higher fuel prices and demanded he do

something about it, last week's action was not what they had in mind. "The

Strategic Petroleum Reserve is supposed be used during genuine national emergencies not as a

mechanism to reduce the price of gasoline," said 4th District Congressman Tom Cole. "If

the Biden administration wants to lower gasoline prices, it should end its war on

the American oil and gas industry. It could do so by reversing its decision

to limit new exploration and production on federal lands and authorizing construction of the

Keystone XL Pipeline." The 600-million barrel Strategic Petroleum Reserve was created in 1973 as

a result of the Middle East oil embargo. It has been tapped from time-to-time

since, although this time is unusual because there is not a declared national emergency

and because it was in concert with several other oil-producing nations. Most experts regard

it as a short-term measure that is more symbolic than anything. "The decision to

tap the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is not a sustainable nor responsible policy solution," said

3rd District Congressman Frank Lucas. "It's time to put American energy first and embrace an all-of-the above energy strategy – one that ensures American energy independence and economic prosperity for all Americans." • Bottleneck blues: Gov. Kevin Stitt joined 14 other Republican governors blaming the Biden administration for supply chain interruptions and a shortage of truck drivers, and calling for suspension of "burdensome regulation" of the trucking industry. Separately, 3rd District Congressman Frank Lucas joined a bipartisan group urging the U.S. Labor Department to prioritize truck driver training within a DOL workforce development grant program. The business sector has complained for years about a growing shortage of long-haul truck drivers, which reportedly has reached 80,000 and become a significant factor in supply chain bottlenecks. On the positive side, the Port of Los Angeles said the backlog there is steadily decreasing, major retailers say they're well-stocked for the holidays, and The Wall Street Journal reported most of the nation's largest companies' are registering profits exceeding those pre-COVID. Wo-wo-wo-WOTUS: Lucas pro the Biden administration's proposal to essentially return to the Obama-era Waters of the U.S. definition. Lucas said while the decision "avoids returning to the disastrous overreach of the 2015 Obama rule, it does dismantle the clarity, certainty, and common sense understanding that came with the Trump administration's Navigable Waters Protection Rule." • Although the Obama administration it, agriculture and industrial interests complained his WOTUS rule was so far-reaching it could have conceivably been interpreted to subject even mud puddles under federal environmental regulation. Conversely environmentalists said Trump's Navigable Waters Protection Rule rolled back earlier clean water safeguards. "As President Biden moves forward with an attempt to revise the definition of Waters of the United States, I implore his administration to avoid tying the hands of our nation's farmers and landowners by subjecting them to unprecedented federal overreach," Lucas said. "The farmers, ranchers, small business owners, and landowners of Oklahoma deserve a streamlined rule that allows them to continue their stewardship of the environment and economic growth." • Campaigns and elections: Republican U.S. Senate candidate Jackson Lahmeyer has scheduled a fundraising event at the church he pastors, Sheridan Church, for 6:30 p.m. Dec. 18. Tickets are \$40 and

include a performance by comedian Brad Stine. Federal law generally bans nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations, including churches, from partisan political activity, but not all churches are 501(c)3s and in any event the law has rarely been enforced in recent years. Bottom lines: U.S.

Sen. James Lankford was among Republican senators calling for a Homeland Security inspector general's investigation into the processing of migrants attempting to enter the U.S. from Mexico. ...

Lucas and other Republicans on the House Financial Services Committee continued to question administration officials about plans to require financial institutions to assess their risk exposure related to climate change, which some regard as way to discourage lending to fossil fuel companies.

Video: Lankford responds to 'unheard of' lack of neutrality from state GOP chairman. Be

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