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Drew Edmondson announces run for governor

Says people are our strength, but state leadership has failed

TULSA, OKLA. May 1, 2017 – “Oklahoma isn’t broken, we’re just broke.”

With a belief in the resiliency of its people and a pledge to stand up for working families, Drew Edmondson today announced his campaign for governor of Oklahoma.

Edmondson said large corporations and the wealthy have prospered, and it’s time working families and small main street businesses get their fair share.

“We don’t need more special tax breaks for the powerful,” Edmondson said. “We need to make sure working families have money in their pockets that they can spend right here in Oklahoma. That is how you create jobs and grow the economy.”

Edmondson said a new direction is necessary so that Oklahoma can be the place people want to live, work and raise a family. Good jobs and great schools should be the norm in our state.

“The symbolism of today’s date is significant,” Edmondson said. “Mayday is a recognized distress call, and that’s where we are in Oklahoma. Our state, our workers, our small business owners, our students, our teachers, our schools are calling for help. Continuing down this path of failed ideas and tired rhetoric will not solve our problems. Our people are our strength, but our leaders have failed us.

“We cannot continue down this path,” Edmondson said. “We don’t need another four years with leaders who are so caught up in the demands of corporate lobbyist that they can’t see the real issues facing real Oklahomans. We can’t survive another four years of willful bankruptcy.”

A Navy veteran who served our country in Vietnam, Edmondson’s first job upon leaving the military was teaching speech and debate at his alma mater, Muskogee Central High School. Drew and his wife, Linda, a retired medical social worker, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in June. They are proud parents to their daughter, Mary, and son-in-law, Mike, and their son, Robert, and daughter-in-law, Andrea. Drew and Linda have two grandchildren, twins Andrew and Catherine.

Edmondson is a graduate of Northeastern State College and the University of Tulsa School of Law. He is a former district attorney and served four terms as Oklahoma's attorney general.

Edmondson stood up against out-of-state corporate interests on many occasions, including fighting industrial and agricultural polluters, Wall Street fraudsters and big tobacco. Just last fall, Edmondson led the Oklahoma Stewardship Council's successful opposition to State Question 777, an effort by multinational corporate agriculture entities to enact sweeping constitutional protections for industrial agricultural facilities.

As attorney general, Edmondson was one of eight attorneys general to negotiate a historic agreement with the big tobacco industry that led to sweeping national changes in the industry's marketing tactics, outlawed marketing to children and resulted in a settlement that will force the industry to pay \$200 billion to the states over 25 years. Oklahoma's share of this settlement is \$2 billion. Edmondson then led the effort to establish the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust, which constitutionally protected the vast majority of Oklahoma's settlement dollars and ensured those funds can only be spent on issues of Oklahomans' public health. The Trust balance stands at more than \$1 billion.

As part of an agreement with Southwestern Bell, Edmondson successfully advocated for the creation of the Oklahoma Educational Technology Trust, which so far has placed more than \$12 million in technology equipment and training in Oklahoma public schools.

"We wanted to create these funding sources for Oklahomans, for students and for schools and to protect them for decades," Edmondson said. "There's not much working correctly in state government today, but those two funds certainly are. That's the kind of governor I'll be. I'll fight for Oklahomans not large corporations. I won't be looking toward the next election. I'll be working for the next generation.

"I don't care about your political party or who you voted for president," Edmondson said. "I care about Oklahoma and Oklahomans. We didn't create this mess, but we can and we will fix it, together."