Oklahoma needs major changes. Our state is broke. Our schools are failing, and our teachers are so underpaid they’re fleeing the state. Rural hospitals are closing, and monopolies are jacking up health care rates and prescription drug costs.

And with all these challenges, our governor and legislature seem more focused on protecting corporate lobbyists than working for the people. Our kids, our families, our farmers and our small businesses are suffering from this failure of leadership.

Oklahoma doesn’t need ideological extremism from either side. We don’t need partisanship or platitudes. We need responsible, experienced leadership and a thoughtful plan to get our state working again.
SO WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT THIS MESS? IT STARTS WITH EDUCATION.

Number one — we need to raise pay for our teachers to match the regional average, and reduce administrative costs to put money back in classrooms.

This isn’t just about doing right by our teachers or giving opportunity to our kids. It’s about our future. If we want to grow our businesses and attract new ones, we must have the entrepreneurs and skilled workers to support them. We need to invest in Oklahomans to build a more prosperous Oklahoma.

Education must come first:
• It’s time for our budget to reflect our priorities. Our teachers need more than a one-time pay raise; they need a series of pay raises to bring salaries up to at least the regional average.
• School funding doesn’t end with teacher pay. Our kids’ textbooks are being held together with duct tape. We need more teachers, smaller class sizes and administrative accountability.
• Pre-K should be available to every student, at every school. Oklahoma’s children deserve a world-class education. That starts with Pre-K.

A RECORD OF GETTING THINGS DONE
Drew created the $30m Oklahoma Educational Technology Trust to put cutting-edge tech in Oklahoma classrooms for years to come.
Number two - the budget should be written for Oklahomans not Oklahoma lobbyists. Our budget process is broken and our priorities have been lost. Legislators are neglecting middle-class families while rewarding special interests. To invest in our people, we’ll close corporate tax loopholes in the state and expand tax deductions for middle-class Oklahomans and small businesses.

It’s not the fault of Oklahoma families that we’re in this mess, and I’m sure not going to make them shoulder the load to fix it. We start by cracking down on those who broke it — the lobbying industry and corrupting political donations and establishing new transparency rules.

And I’ll establish an Office of Open Government within the governor’s office to facilitate the public’s right to know. The Fallin administration’s practice of stonewalling the public ends with me.
AFTER EIGHT YEARS OF ABSENT LEADERSHIP
DREW IS THE CHANGE WE NEED.

Number three - no more absentee leadership. Our Governor has been asleep at the wheel instead of leading our state. To grow our economy out of this mess, the governor must work with private industry and lead our state in economic development:

- Work with existing companies to expand operations and help recruit new businesses to come to Oklahoma. Right now, Oklahoma is telling a story of retreat and closed schools, not opportunity and a new era of progress.
- Work with every county on economic development, not just in Tulsa and Oklahoma City. Rural counties are losing family farms and rural hospitals are shutting down.

We can breathe new life into these communities by encouraging investment, expanding fiber optic networks and passing a Family Farmers Bill of Rights to empower small farmers with fair market access.

- Focus on maximizing our return on investment. No more waste, corruption or inefficiency. All budgets will have zero-based budgeting, streamlining of executive positions and a robust whistleblower program.
- Staff the Department of Commerce with experienced business professionals who will drive development. No more appointments based on contributions or cronyism.
- Promote public-private partnerships, and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship.
QUALITY HEALTH CARE SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ALL OKLAHOMANS.

**Number four - put people first on health care.** Every Oklahoman should be free to choose the best health care for themselves. Our governor’s decision to reject Medicaid expansion not only robbed tens of thousands of health care, it created an insurance monopoly that robbed Oklahomans of choice and let the insurance companies set sky-high rates. It also crippled the ability of our state’s rural hospitals to provide care to low-income Oklahomans and put enormous pressure on local economies across the state.

On my first day as Governor, Drew Edmondson will reverse our legislature’s harmful decision to reject Medicaid expansion funds. We need to bring both parties together and consider every option to make sure our health care market is competitive, affordable and working for our families, not insurance companies. To tackle out-of-control prescription costs, we will force the negotiation of price increases, sue companies that manipulate costs and import drugs from Canada where it is safe and effective to do so.

Finally, we must keep our promise to our veterans — and make sure they are treated with the respect they’ve earned. That starts by ensuring the best medical and mental health care we can provide, and improving education benefits and veterans’ employment.
We need to be honest with ourselves: none of this is going to be easy. Our state is in serious trouble, and there’s no magic wand.

But hard work doesn’t discourage us. We’re Oklahomans. We can roll up our sleeves, put aside our divisions, and get real results — to fix our schools, protect our veterans, and get affordable access to healthcare. This isn’t a partisan fight, it’s a fight for Oklahoma’s future. And it’s one we can win.

That’s my charge, and I hope you’ll join with me.