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Oklahoma Senate Sets Ambitious Agenda With 2026 Interim Studies

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Oklahoma state senators are preparing for a busy summer and fall as they dive into dozens of policy issues that could shape the state's future. Senate Leader Lonnie Paxton, a Republican from Tuttle, has approved 73 interim studies, covering topics that impact everyday Oklahomans from property taxes and school choice to health care access and storm chaser protections.

These interim studies serve as a chance for lawmakers to dig deeper into challenges that might require new legislation. They also allow senators to keep ideas alive that fell short of becoming law in past sessions.

One high-profile topic this year is county home rule, which refers to granting counties more power to manage their affairs without as much state oversight. Paxton and Senate Democratic Leader Julia Kirt plan to examine whether Oklahoma's existing home rule law, which currently doesn't apply to any counties, should be updated to allow more local control.

School choice programs will also be under scrutiny. Senator Carri Hicks of Oklahoma City will lead a study to review whether the Parental Choice Tax Credit truly helps families across income levels. Early figures show that over 40% of the tax credits went to families making at least \$150,000 a year, sparking debate about fairness and access.

On the health care front, Senator Mark Mann has requested a study on requiring insurance companies to cover genetic testing for Alzheimer's disease, while another effort will explore better ways to deliver benefits to Oklahoma's military veterans.

Senators will also look at proposed changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps. Governor Kevin Stitt's administration wants to limit SNAP purchases of soda and candy as part of a broader health initiative.

Other studies will take on property taxes, including proposals to either reform or completely abolish them, as well as new rules around how the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority notifies property owners about projects.

Even storm chasing will return to the agenda after a previous effort to protect chasers who work for media and universities failed last year. Senator Mann hopes more research will build support for these protections.

These discussions will help set the stage for the 2026 legislative session, giving lawmakers a chance to hear from experts, gather public input, and consider how to make policies more effective for all Oklahomans.

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