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THE HOT SEAT: OKLAHOMA SENATOR PUSHES ECONOMIC GROWTH, TOURISM IN NEW LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE

Sen. Kristen Thompson sits down with Scott Mitchell on The Hot Seat and discusses her "Oklahoma Forward" agenda, which aims to boost economic development, workforce growth, and tourism.

Saturday, February 8th 2025, 12:32 pm

By: Scott Mitchell

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OKLAHOMA CITY -



Oklahoma lawmakers are working to make the state more business- and tourism-friendly with a new **Senate committee on economic development, workforce, and tourism.**

Sen. **Kristen Thompson (R-Edmond)** chairs the new committee and says the focus will be on strengthening the economy through job growth and industry expansion.

"We're going to be focusing on economic development, workforce, and tourism—how those all work together for the economy," Thompson said. "We're really going to work on addressing our workforce needs. This is a national issue."

"Oklahoma Forward" Legislation

Thompson recently introduced a **legislative package called "Oklahoma Forward"**, which she says reflects the priorities of her constituents in **District 22** while benefiting the entire state.

"I'm born and raised in Oklahoma, fourth generation," Thompson said. "This is where we've chosen to make our home, and I want my kids to stay here. I want to be able to watch my grandkids grow up."

She describes the package as "**common sense legislation**" designed to support business growth and economic expansion.

Commerce and Business Retention

One key area of focus is **business retention and recruitment**. Thompson previously worked with Rep. **Nicole Miller (R-Edmond)** to restructure the **Oklahoma Department of Commerce**, giving it a **more targeted approach**.

"While we're focusing on business retention, we are also going to be focusing on our main streets, right?" Thompson said. "So, helping our local communities grow what they have, looking at how we can recruit new businesses, and just having a more intentional look in that."

Competing with Other States

As **Governor Kevin Stitt** calls for policies to make Oklahoma more competitive with states like **Texas and Florida**, Thompson says **tax policy isn't the only factor**.

"I think what we really need to do as a state is figure out what we're good at," she said. "We have tasked commerce with putting out a strategic plan, identifying our targeted industries, and that's what we need to go after."

While acknowledging that Oklahoma has had some missed opportunities in industries like **battery manufacturing**, Thompson says the priority should be on **supporting long-standing businesses already in the state**.

"We have some fantastic companies who have been here for 25, 50 years," she said. "We need to make sure that we're supporting them."

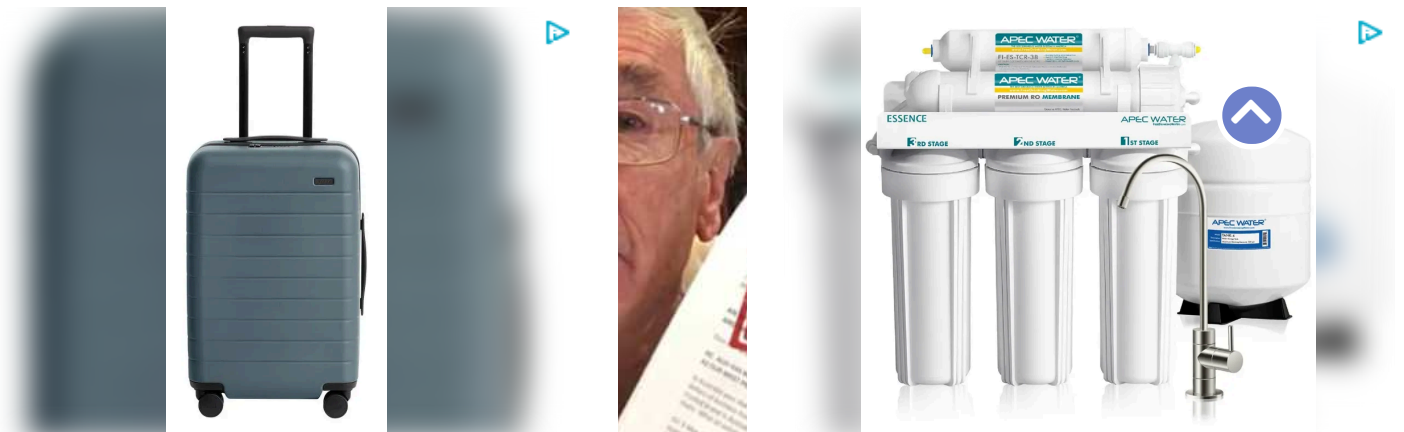
As the legislative session moves forward, Thompson says the **Senate and her office will continue pushing for policies that help existing businesses expand** while attracting new industries to the state.

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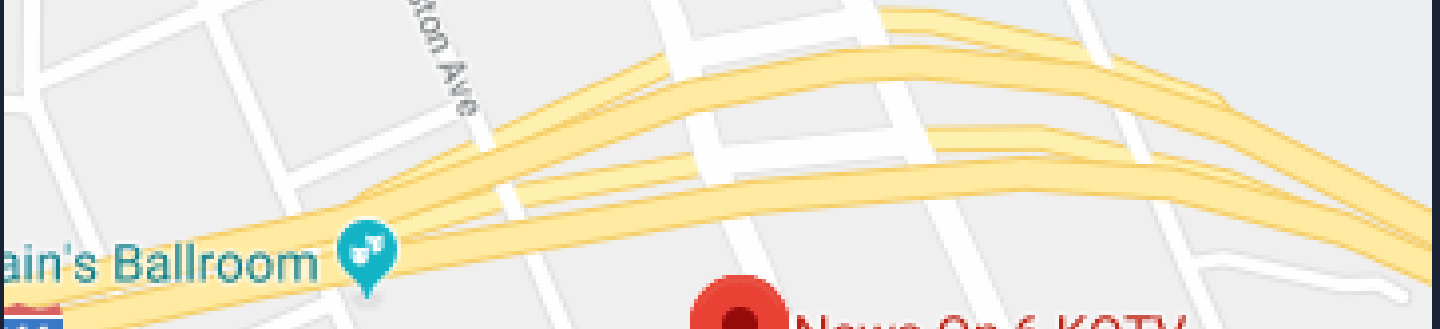


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