

Health care law committee to begin work

OKLAHOMA CITY – Legislative leaders today announced membership and meetings of the Joint Committee on Federal Health Care Law, a special legislative committee that will study how the new federal health care law affects Oklahoma.

Senate Pro Tem Brian Bingman and House Speaker Kris Steele ordered the formation of the joint committee this past legislative session to ensure Oklahoma properly addresses the Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

At the direction of co-chairmen Sen. Gary Stanislawski, R-Tulsa, and Rep. Glen Mulready, R-Tulsa, the Joint Committee on Federal Health Care Law will do its work through a series of public meetings in Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

The committee's first meeting will be Sept. 14 in Oklahoma City. The committee is expected to meet at least five times through November.

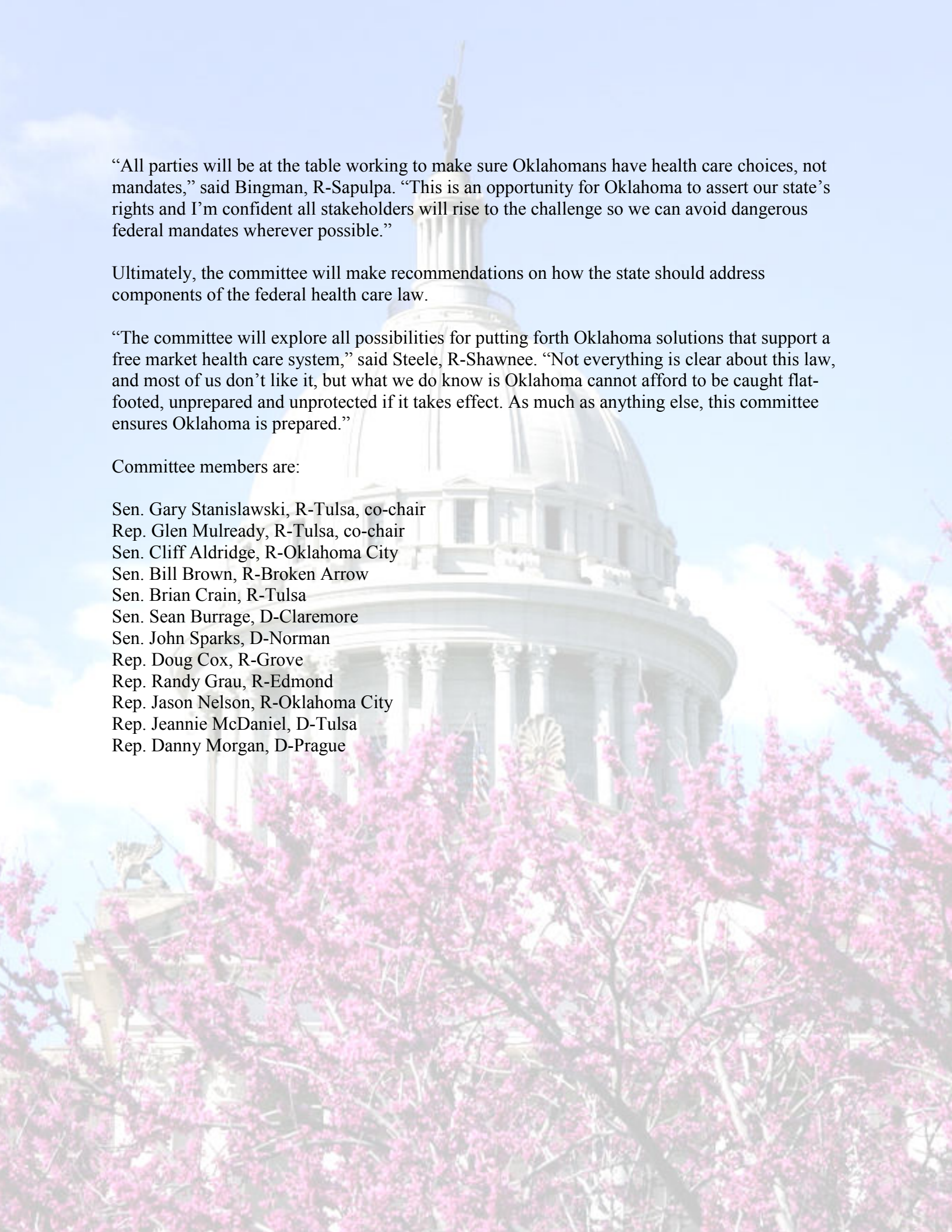
“Having suitable health care options in Oklahoma is an issue the Legislature takes very seriously and intends to proactively protect and address through this committee,” said Stanislawski, a Certified Financial Planner. “Oklahoma patients, taxpayers, businesses, health practitioners, insurers and others all have wide-ranging questions and concerns about this largely unwanted new federal law. The law will affect all Oklahomans, some in significant ways, so this committee will seek to address all relevant questions and concerns for the benefit of all Oklahomans.”

Among the topics to be studied are the state of health care in Oklahoma, logistics and ramifications of implementing the federal health care law, implementation timelines, responses to the law and the costs local governments and businesses may face as a result of the law.

The committee will also explore the implications Oklahoma's lawsuit challenging the law's constitutionality may have on the law's implementation here.

“Clearly, most Oklahomans oppose this law. While we have taken steps to guard against harmful portions of the law, we would be remiss if we did not continue reviewing it so we can do our best to protect a choice-based, free-market health care system for Oklahomans,” said Mulready, a 28-year insurance industry veteran. “Simply put, the committee will show Oklahoma what to expect from this law, how we can continue to protect Oklahoma's interests and how we can make sure we are best prepared as a state.”

The committee will solicit testimony and recommendations from a wide range of public and private sector experts. It is expected to hear from state and federal policymakers, business officials, insurance agents and brokers, legal experts, health care industry officials and more.



“All parties will be at the table working to make sure Oklahomans have health care choices, not mandates,” said Bingman, R-Sapulpa. “This is an opportunity for Oklahoma to assert our state’s rights and I’m confident all stakeholders will rise to the challenge so we can avoid dangerous federal mandates wherever possible.”

Ultimately, the committee will make recommendations on how the state should address components of the federal health care law.

“The committee will explore all possibilities for putting forth Oklahoma solutions that support a free market health care system,” said Steele, R-Shawnee. “Not everything is clear about this law, and most of us don’t like it, but what we do know is Oklahoma cannot afford to be caught flat-footed, unprepared and unprotected if it takes effect. As much as anything else, this committee ensures Oklahoma is prepared.”

Committee members are:

Sen. Gary Stanislawski, R-Tulsa, co-chair
Rep. Glen Mulready, R-Tulsa, co-chair
Sen. Cliff Aldridge, R-Oklahoma City
Sen. Bill Brown, R-Broken Arrow
Sen. Brian Crain, R-Tulsa
Sen. Sean Burrage, D-Claremore
Sen. John Sparks, D-Norman
Rep. Doug Cox, R-Grove
Rep. Randy Grau, R-Edmond
Rep. Jason Nelson, R-Oklahoma City
Rep. Jeannie McDaniel, D-Tulsa
Rep. Danny Morgan, D-Prague