



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: A Conversation with a Pro-Life Governor

Guest(s): Governor Kevin Stitt

Air Date: July 6, 2022

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener-supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Hello, and welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. The reversal of Roe versus Wade on Friday, June the 24th was a victorious day for Christians and pro-lifers everywhere who believe that life begins at conception. Dr. Dobson has been praying and working for this day since Roe first passed almost 50 years ago. We thank God for this victory and will continue to work until abortion is unthinkable. The interview that you're about to hear features our co-host Dr. Tim Clinton and the governor of Oklahoma. Kevin Stitt. Governor Stitt is arguably the most pro-life governor in the country right now. In May of this year, he signed into law a bill that banned all abortions in Oklahoma beginning at conception. What an incredible triumph for life. We'll hear more about that new law and Governor Stitt's faith on today's edition of Family Talk. Here now to introduce his guest is Dr. Tim Clinton.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, I have in studio with me today, Governor Kevin Stitt of Oklahoma. He's an entrepreneur who has had a tremendous amount of success in business, banking, and finance. And Oklahomans spoke in record numbers that they wanted him to transform their state. Governor Stitt has taken a groundbreaking approach to his administration by appointing the most female cabinet members in state history and tapping expert advisors from the private sector. Stitt is a fourth generation Oklahoman and a graduate of Oklahoma State University. He and his wife have been married for 24 years and they have six children. Well, there's a lot going on in Oklahoma, great economic growth, pro-life legislation, upholding family values, fighting against the war, being waged on kids and more. But Oklahoma isn't immune to the tragedies in our country, the recent shooting at the medical facility in Tulsa is just another example of how broken our nation is and how the mental health crisis is affecting every corner of the United States. Governor Stitt is here to discuss that and a lot more.

Governor, welcome to Family Talk. Dr. Dobson so wishes he could be here with you and wanted to send his regards.

Kevin Stitt: Absolutely. Well, thank you so much for having me here. And I'm such a big fan of Dr. Dobson and have listened to him for years. And my wife and I, with young children, as we've raised our kids, we took a lot of inspiration from the way he parented and some of his advice. So can't wait to meet him personally sometime.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It made me smile when I said you and Sarah have six children. I come from a family of eight. Can't imagine, must be a little wild around your home.

Kevin Stitt: We go from 21 down to eight, our youngest-

Dr. Tim Clinton: I was going to say, do you know the names and ages?

Kevin Stitt: I occasionally will quiz myself and make sure I got their birthdays. I don't want to be the dad that can't remember their birthdays. So I've got them down.

Dr. Tim Clinton: There's always a lot of backwater to a story like yours. You have quite an impressive business resume. You build a massive nationwide mortgage company. You're known as a strong family man and a strong man of faith. Do you mind sharing with us a little about your faith journey and what brought you to this place, politics and public office.

Kevin Stitt: It truly is a faith story. When I talk to people, it starts and ends with my faith and my trust in the Lord. And just as a little boy, my dad was a pastor and so always grew up in the church. And then sometime in high school, occasionally kind of was searching a little bit and then in college, but really just had a personal experience with Jesus Christ in college and just sat down and opened my Bible in Genesis. I said, "Lord, I want you to reveal yourself to me and not through my parents, but I want to experience you." And those who seek him, he'll reveal himself to you. And if you knock, he'll open the door. And so just encourage everybody. That's where everything starts and ends, is your faith. And there's nothing more important in life than your relationship with the Lord. Everything in this world is meaningless compared to our relationship with the Lord.

Dr. Tim Clinton: My dad was a pastor too. I reflect back on him. He was the kindest man I've ever known. Governor, he was a strong man of faith, loved to watch my dad just minister to people. He loved the gospel. He had the secondary income by driving a school bus. He picked the kids up on the back roads to bring them out to the main road for the yellow bus to pick him up. And then he usually sit along there. And I asked him, "Dad, what are you sitting there doing?" He said, "Tim, what I do is try to read the word, spend time with God. And then I pray for every one of you kids." I never forgot that. When you have a godly father, you've got something special.

Kevin Stitt: Amen. That's exactly right. That's exactly right. I tell my parents all the time that the godly foundation that they gave me means more than anything. So really,

really proud of that. And my mom's just amazing and they're both great. They've been married for 55 years now.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Beautiful. When it comes to public office, I think a lot of people wonder about the role and influence of a governor. Would you mind maybe just sharing a little bit about the issue of federal power and state power and why it's important to understand and know the difference there?

Kevin Stitt: Sure, absolutely. Well, I think it's so important that we really understand our Constitution, which is the supreme law of the land. And it specifically tells us, and our founding fathers, if you read what they were thinking when they formed that Constitution, they were so afraid of a centralized government that was going to dictate and mandate they put the Bill of Rights in place and they said, "Hey, what specifically doesn't belong to the federal government belongs to the states or the people." And it's 50 different examples of democracy around the country with our 50 state model. And we understand, you may do things differently in California or New York or Florida or Texas or Tennessee than you do in Oklahoma, and that's okay. I represent all 4 million Oklahomans. I'm closer to the people. I'm in all 77 counties. I feel like I've met all 4 million Oklahomans because as you travel the state, I know what the issues are. And I represent Oklahoma values. And that's exactly what it's designed for. And so we love that model.

We believe the Constitution means what it says and your pursuit of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is different than it is in Oklahoma than it might be in Manhattan. And that's okay. Again, I just think this federal overreach and the mandates and we saw, there was never a bigger difference between a blue state and a red state than during COVID, as you saw some leaders locking their states down and determining what businesses should open or close. Shutting schools down. The hypocrisy of some of those folks, that their kids, these governors, some of their kids were in school, in private schools in person, But yet they were telling their home state it's not safe to go to schools. And I just found that so disappointing. And so we kept all of our schools open. I was one of the only governors that didn't do a mask mandate statewide. And so we are tremendously benefiting from that now as people are flocking to Oklahoma, because of our freedoms, our pro-business values, our policies. And so it's just exciting right now. It's a great time to be in Oklahoma. We're becoming the flavor of the month as a state. It's really cool.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You are a governor who is of the people, by the people, for the people. We know that. Whatever is in your background, you're also pretty bold and courageous, not afraid to take on the tough issues. Let's go straight to abortion in America. The bottom line is that the abortion issue is going to go back to the states. That's what's going to happen. What does that mean to you?

Kevin Stitt: Yeah, well, that's exactly right. People don't really understand. The Supreme Court isn't saying that abortion's illegal, they're just simply saying this is a state issue and every state's going to deal with it differently. And that's exactly what

should happen. You shouldn't have nine unelected jurists that are deciding what happens in the state of Oklahoma or the state of California, et cetera. And so we're really excited because in Oklahoma, we overwhelmingly stand for life. And I just passed, I'm called the most pro-life governor in the country. I'm proud of that. And I don't know how many more times I can be interviewed by national media. I said, yes, we don't want abortion in the state of Oklahoma. I don't know how much clearer we can be. I signed a bill that banned abortion at conception. And you could argue when you think life begins, but I'll tell you this, the states like Colorado, that just passed abortion on demand, like all the way up to birth, that's the most barbaric.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It's unbelievable.

Kevin Stitt: It's unbelievable. So when you think about the European countries, France, socialist Sweden, they banned it like 14 weeks, 18 weeks. And maybe you have a conversation about that. We believe it starts at conception, but it's certainly not all the way up until birth. And these states that are abortion on demand, it is barbaric. It's gross. What's the difference between a one month old baby and a baby that's eight inches away or a one hour old baby.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's the whole issue of personhood. That really comes down to the debate. That is the debate. The other side, on the abortion side. It's like, no, this is my body, my decision. No, this is not your body. This is another life that we're talking about here. I wanted to go to that issue. In Texas, Texas had, at the time, by the way, the country was ecstatic when Texas passed that heartbeat bill. It was looked at as the most conservative abortion law in the country and it really encouraged the pro-life community. What happened though in Oklahoma, you're right, took it to a whole new place. There's been a lot of pushback from the administration on Texas. They're doing everything they can in any way they can to short circuit that. The question to you was, are you starting to see that now in Oklahoma? Because you did pass the most conservative law on abortion in the country, and you are seen as the most pro-life governor in the country.

Kevin Stitt: Sure. I mean, we saw, from the White House press conference, their press statement, they sent out press statements ragging on Oklahoma. And again, this is a state issue. As far as federal money, There's always threats of withholding this or withholding that. About 40% of a state's money comes from the federal government for roads and bridges and healthcare and the Medicaid, et cetera, et cetera. So it's just disappointing. It's Oklahoma tax dollars. It's Texas tax dollars. It's not the federal government's tax dollars. It's the people's money, number one. So to withhold that, we just absolutely disagree with that method. But I also want to say in Oklahoma, we think we can love the mother and the child. We think we can put services and church groups and nonprofits. In my department of health, I put \$3 million. And I did tax credits this year for people that want to be adoptive parents.

As governor, you get to talk to the people and I've met CEOs and people wrote me letters and they said, "Governor, thank you for your stance because I was

one of those babies that was left on the doorstep of a fire department, and I was adopted." Or "Thank goodness, here's what happened in my story. And my mom was told to abort, but she had me and here's what I'm doing today. And here's my life." I hear all those stories. And so we want to be the number one state in the country that loves the parents. There's crisis pregnancies out there. We want to wrap around and tell people that God has a future of not only for you, but also for that young person, because we believe that God has uniquely designed every single person. And there's a hope and a future for everybody.

That's my message to young people in the state of Oklahoma, that God has a plan for you, and everybody's unique. Don't compare yourself to your sister. I tell my own kids this, your brother, your sister. You be the best person you can be. It is a loser strategy to compare yourself to others. And I did that back in college. We're all guilty of that. But if you be the best person that you can be, people start looking at you and saying, "Man, I wish I was like that person." And so just go be the person that you're designed to be and it's just amazing life.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It's encouraging here, the pro-life movement, I think most would say they're winning. The pro-life movement is winning. And there are a lot of states out there now who are taking notice about what's happened in Texas and in Oklahoma. Are you receiving feedback, word from other states about, Hey, how did you guys get through this? And how did you get it done?

Kevin Stitt: Well, you know, the Republican Governor Association, we get together as leaders and we get together three or four times a year. It's a great organization. We're able to bounce ideas off each other. But sure, I think people are looking at states like Oklahoma. I'm going to continue to be bold. I think people are looking for straight talking, bold leadership and most politicians beat around the bush. And I came from the private sector. I'd never ran for office before. I started my company with a thousand dollars and a computer and grew it. Our founders did not think politics was going to be a profession. They thought you would be a successful farmer or rancher or pastor or business person or teacher. And you would leave that and you'd go serve your state of your country and then you'd come back to the private sector.

That's exactly what I'm doing. That's what I plan on doing. And I think we need more people doing that. And so I raised my hand and ran for governor. And when you have that type of freedom, you literally can be bold and just always think about the next generation, not the next election. And I just encourage others to run for school board and city council and mayor and state legislature, because we have to take our country back by getting normal, everyday Americans in these different offices that are going to serve with the integrity and the values that we know are important that our country was founded on.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You're listening to Family Talk, a division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host. Our special in-studio guest, Governor Kevin Stitt from the great state of Oklahoma, talking a lot about what's happening there in that state and what God's doing in and through his life. We just talked about,

Governor, the whole issue of abortion and the bill that you signed into legislation there, into law. I want to go to this rash of shootings, go to that racially motivated shooting up in Buffalo, go out to California, that church shooting, go down to Uvalde, Texas and that horrific, senseless, barbaric act down there of shooting elementary kids, to Tulsa. You must be deeply grieved and concerned about what's happened in Tulsa. Can you give us a little bit of background and your thoughts about what happened there?

Kevin Stitt: Like all Americans, we're were grieving with the families. I mean the Uvalde situation was just absolutely heartbreaking. And I thought back to, in 1995, when Governor Keating was in my seat in Oklahoma. We had that Oklahoma City bombing that happened April 19th and 168 people lost their lives. There were 17 children in that building that were in the daycare. And so we've experienced that in Oklahoma. There's absolute evil, I can't think of anything worse to happen. We need to grieve with those families right now. And then the deal that just happened in Tulsa and that's so close to home because my friends knew, were so connected. A small state, one degree separated from those two doctors that were killed.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You step back from it and you begin to think about what's going on in the mind of a person who would go in and start shooting 7, 8, 9, 10 year old kids. You have children. I have kids. You begin to think about how dark it must be in there. From a mental health perspective, you begin to think about what was going on in his life. What happened to this boy? I think when you see that school shooting kind of narrative, you see there's a common theme there. These young men are in there pulling the triggers and you start thinking about mental health related issues and this gaming insanity that's going on and the bullying up online. And then you start thinking about fatherlessness and pornography and so many factors that fuel all this stuff. And I think we've got to take a hard look at those kind of issues. Governor, you're seeing the same thing there? You're concerned about mental health related themes and more?

Kevin Stitt: We are. We're trying to invest in that in Oklahoma. Back to the governors, we talk all the time. I talk to Pete Ricketts, the governor of Nebraska, and he was telling me some studies that they're seeing in Nebraska on the mental health sides and the people that are studying some of the mass shootings and what's happening there on the mental health side. So you're exactly right, if there was one thing that we could point to, we obviously, as Americans fix it, but it comes down to all that. It comes down to teaching the right and wrong and the values. We've taken God out of schools. We do have some mental health crisis in our states. So those are all things we need to take a deeper look at.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It's been a pretty tough go the last couple of years. The APA, the American Psychological Association, came out with a report earlier this year that said there were three factors that were really fueling stress in America, which they saw at a peak. And that was money, stress, inflation, and they added the war in Ukraine. The concern about what's happening on a global stage and are we headed for World War III? And you come back to inflation's not going away.

Governor, there's so much here. People are on edge, they're emotionally shot. And yet at the same time with this censorship and suppression. And I want to go there, especially with Christians and more, there's a real concern about what's happening and what can be done or what will be done. Somebody somewhere needs to step up and be a voice. Silence isn't an option. And we're done with this shaming and the stigmatizing of people. Governor, what are you seeing in the people of Oklahoma?

Kevin Stitt: I think people are standing up and people are starting to talk like what you're saying there. People are tired of not being able to respectfully disagree.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Let's figure out how to coexist.

Kevin Stitt: We've lost our humanity. And when you're one on one with people, it breaks down instead of grouping up. When you group up and you're on Facebook and you're on all the different social media, it's this group against this group. I tell everybody in Oklahoma all the time, I said, "Listen, we're all Oklahomans. Let Washington, DC play politics." I said, "In Oklahoma, we're just going to make our state a top 10 state. Let's focus on, we all want the same things. We want the best education for our kids. We want the best roads and bridges, best economy, best healthcare." It's those four things that I always bring people back to focus on. And let's not worry about the politics. But I do think from a Christian value standard, it's okay to talk about what my values are and here's what I think we should do. And I think the church needs to step up. It's been silent.

I think the silent majority that we talk about, I think they're getting pretty restless and you've got this vocal minority. I signed this bill. It was called Save Women in Sports bill. And to us in Oklahoma, it's total common sense. It's like, I'm going to protect girls sports. And I get interviewed by the Washington Post. And they're like, "Governor, you signed this controversial bill." And I said, "Well, hang on. It's not controversial in Oklahoma." I said, "Oklahoma, we believe that there's a difference between boys and girls. And I'm not going to let a biological male compete with girls sports." And the girls love it because I have college athletes that run track at OU and Oklahoma State come up to me like, "Thank you for saving my scholarship." Whether you're doing weight lifting or swimming or track and field or little 14-year old girls that are playing volleyball, they compete. And they want the chance to win and do their best. And that's common sense.

And now we've got a vocal minority that says that's not right. I signed the bill that just said, "Hey, in K through 12, that means public schools kindergarten through 12th grade, I'm not going to let a boy go to girls' bathroom." Okay. Pretty common sense to us. And we also said in this bill that we're going to have a third option. So if you don't feel comfortable in a girls or boys, you can go to this third bathroom. And people think that's controversial, but you know what, I represent all those fifth grade girls and sixth grade girls that called our office and were afraid to go to the bathroom because of a biological male might come

in there. So anyway, it's common sense in Oklahoma, but that doesn't seem very common if you're going to just give away to a very vocal minority.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Governor, this has been a really encouraging conversation. I think for those who are out there, they're saying, we want him governor in our state. That would be fantastic. God is at work.

Kevin Stitt: Amen.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We know that. And we believe that. For people who feel like they're trapped, maybe they feel a little helpless, what would you say to them across the nation?

Kevin Stitt: Number one, I think you have to be informed about the issues. I tell that everywhere I speak. I said an informed citizenry is so important that you understand the issues, not just the 30-second commercial that some group can pay money to run an ad in your state. Really go to those local events and you can go and you can meet the governor and you can meet your legislature and you can understand what the issues are today. And I just encourage people to do that. And also, stand up with a voice and get involved in your local community. Get involved with your school district or get involved with your local town and say, "Hey, here's right and wrong in our town. And we're going to stand for that." I'm not against any one person, but we know what's right and we're going to continue with that same tradition in Oklahoma.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You grew up as a pastor's kid. I grew up as a PK, pastor's kid. We love the gospel. We've taught our whole life that it's about what God's doing. But I also heard someone say this too, that as you look at the public square, politics or advocacy matters because policies matter and policies matter because people matter. It affects their everyday life. It matters to all of us. God be with us for such a time as this. Hey, on behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, the entire team at Family Talk, we tip the hat to you. Thank you for your bold and courageous stand. God be with you, give you strength and a lot of guidance.

Kevin Stitt: Amen. Thank you so much.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Thank you. Thank you for joining us.

Kevin Stitt: Thanks for having me.

Roger Marsh: Well, amen. You're listening to Family Talk. And that was our co-host Dr. Tim Clinton and his recent conversation with Governor Kevin Stitt of Oklahoma. Governor Stitt is known as the most pro-life governor in the nation and is proud of the fact that in his state, abortion is now banned from the moment of conception. To listen to any of today's program that you might have missed, visit drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. Or give us a call at (877) 732-6825.

Hopefully you've been able to enjoy some extra time with your family during these first few weeks of summer. During this time of year, my family loves to just spend time together. It's always fun to get rid of the busy schedules and spend time with the grandkids, and Lisa and I really enjoy doing that each and every summer. Family time can be wonderful, but sometimes family relationships are more taxing than anything else.

Well, if you have a specific relationship that just came to mind when I mentioned the word, taxing, well, I'd like to invite you to do a 30-day kindness challenge for that individual. Now, for the entire month of July, the JDFI has partnered with best-selling author, Shaunti Feldhahn to facilitate Shaunti's 30-day kindness challenge for all of our listeners. The challenge involves choosing one person who you want to have a better relationship with. Then you practice three simple elements of kindness for 30 days straight. Shaunti and her team found that when you do the kindness challenge, 89% of the relationships involved actually improved, and only one of you has to do it. With all the division and hatred in our world right now, I think we all could use a little extra kindness, don't you?

Well, to learn more about the kindness challenge and to sign up, visit drjamesdobson.org/kindnesschallenge. You can join anytime this month, but why not get started today? That web address, once again is drjamesdobson.org/kindnesschallenge. Well, that's all the time we have for today's edition to Family Talk. Thanks so much for listening. I'm Roger Marsh. Hope you'll join us again next time.

Announcer:

This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.