

Salesman for the State

ORU alumnus Matt Pinnell has announced his candidacy for lieutenant governor of the state of Oklahoma. Pinnell, a Republican, firmly believes in the future of Oklahoma and that it can be a state everyone can be proud of.

Across the country, the position of lieutenant governor is an appointed position within the governor's cabinet. However, in Oklahoma, the position is put on the ballot and voted on by the electorate.

Although lieutenant governor is second in command in the state, the position still has a large role of advocacy. The lieutenant governor promotes ideas supported by the governor's agenda and utilizes them to bring growth to the state.

"You are the salesman for the state. And not just in the state, but nationally," said Pinnell.

Previously, Pinnell served as the youngest state chairman of the Oklahoma GOP during the 2010 and 2012 election cycles. After helping the GOP win notable statewide elections during those two years, Pinnell received a call from Washington. He then served as National State Party Director at the Republican National Committee.

Pinnell helped Republicans secure the Senate in 2014, therefore assisting President Donald Trump win the presidency in 2016. Despite his high profile position with the RNC, he wanted to come back to Oklahoma, the state where he grew up and the state he loves.

"As I spoke in every state, the reaction I would get from people was not great. Our brand was not great. At that point I started to get the itch if a position was available and there was," said Pinnell.

Pinnell wants to see an expanded work-force in the state. He believes that a diversified economy, private sector job growth and a pro-business environment can take Oklahoma to the next level.

"We lost 21,000 oil and gas jobs from Oklahoma. Now, we'll always be an oil and gas state. But a diversified economy will create an environment where we're not completely dependent on one industry," said Pinnell.

His pro-small business policy ideas stem from his experience as a small business owner. Pinnell and his wife, also an ORU graduate, started a company known as "Binxy Baby" out of their own kitchen. It has now grown into a company where their patented shopping cart hammock for infants are sold globally.

According to Smart Politics, Oklahoma is one of the most GOP-dominated states in the country, and the Republican presidential candidate has won the state every election since 1968. However, Pinnell considers himself different from every other conservative official in Oklahoma.

"I've always been someone who can bring people together and solve the problems we have in the state," said Pinnell.

Even with the election still over a year away, Pinnell has already received notable endorsements. Rep. Jim Bridenstine of the first district, and Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner John “Okie” Doak gave their full support for Pinnell.

“Matt Pinnell is a proven leader in Republican politics,” said Bridenstine. “I am proud to endorse Matt Pinnell for the next lieutenant governor.”

When Pinnell announced his candidacy, he sent an email memo with the subject line, “Make No Little Plans.” He attributes his time at ORU to being one of the greatest influences on his life.

“If we’re the buckle of the Bible belt, we should act like it. We need to take care of our citizens,” said Pinnell. “I want my kids to grow up in a state they can be proud of. Which means we’re a state that cares of our citizens.”