



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on October 10, 2025

Stitt Breaks With GOP Governors Over Trump's Guard Deployment to Illinois

In an [interview](#) with *The New York Times*, Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt, who chairs the National Governors Association (NGA), broke ranks with other Republican governors over the recent deployment of Texas National Guard troops to Illinois. Speaking with a hint of dry irony, Stitt said what should be obvious — if a Democratic governor sent troops into a red state, conservatives would be furious.

His message was blunt: You can't shout "states' rights" for years and then cheer when another governor sends soldiers across state lines. Per the outlet,



AP Images
Kevin Stitt

Mr. Stitt on Thursday said, "We believe in the federalist system — that's states' rights," adding, "Oklahomans would lose their mind if Pritzker in Illinois sent troops down to Oklahoma during the Biden administration."

While Stitt said he supports strong measures to protect law enforcement and maintain order in cities such as Chicago, he warned that letting governors deploy troops beyond their borders without consent sets a dangerous precedent. Still, his proposed remedy — for President Donald Trump to "federalize the troops in Illinois first" — looked more like a balancing act than a true defense of state sovereignty. Federalizing a state's guard without its governor's consent would itself be an intrusion on states' rights, though one permitted under very narrow exceptions in federal law.

"One Governor Against Another"

Stitt said he was caught off guard by Texas Governor Greg Abbott's move:

Abbott and I sued the Biden administration when the shoe was on the other foot and the Biden administration was trying to force us to vaccinate all of our soldiers and force masks across the country.

He added: "As a federalist believer, one governor against another governor, I don't think that's the right way to approach this."

[Abbott sent](#) roughly 400 members of the Texas National Guard into Illinois Monday evening, following a direct order from President Donald Trump to "safeguard federal officials" operating in several U.S. cities. The following morning, Guard convoys were sighted in the Chicago area, [according](#) to the *Chicago Tribune*. On Thursday, a U.S. district judge in Chicago [temporarily blocked](#) the deployment, arguing that allowing Guard troops into Illinois would only "add fuel to the fire," signaling that the court viewed the deployment as a potential escalation rather than a stabilizing action.



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Though Stitt said he hadn't yet spoken to Abbott directly, he noted that the topic would likely come up soon when the two meet in Dallas for the Oklahoma-Texas football game. Stitt expressed the camaraderie between himself and the Texan governor, saying,

I would send troops to the southern border on his request, anytime he wanted them, and I know he would do the same for me.

Stitt's comments mark the first public break among Republican governors over the interstate Guard deployment — and the first to challenge it on constitutional grounds. His underlying point was simple: Once you justify crossing state lines now, you can't complain when the other side does it later.

The NGA Under Pressure

Stitt clarified that he was speaking as Oklahoma's governor, not as NGA chairman. "We're not going to be weighing into the politics. That's not our lane," he told the *Times*, noting that the NGA is registered as an educational organization under IRS rules, not a political one.

Still, the issue is testing the NGA's unity. Democratic Governors J.B. Pritzker of Illinois and Gavin Newsom of California have threatened to leave the association if it doesn't denounce the Texas deployment. Stitt, however, held the line, saying such statements would go beyond the group's purpose.

He urged both sides to show restraint and accept the fact that "elections have consequences on both federal and local levels":

That applies both for Democrats who dislike Mr. Trump and for Republicans who oppose elected state leaders such as Mr. Pritzker and Mr. Newsom.

"Let's give the other side the benefit of the doubt," Stitt urged, "They're doing what they think is right for their state or their country." And, with a flash of humor, he added, "Maybe you just haven't asked the right ones," when pressed on whether other Republican governors share his concerns.

Trump vs. Chicago: Mutual Accusations

[Operation Midway Blitz](#), announced by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on September 8, brought the spat between the Trump administration and Illinois to a new level. The federal officials described the operation as an effort to target "the worst of the worst" illegal aliens, coddled "for years" by "Governor Pritzker and his fellow sanctuary politicians." But on the ground, accusations of abuse and overreach quickly mounted.

Pritzker accused federal agents of "[terrorizing](#)" neighborhoods and turning city into a "[war zone](#)" as a precursor to sending in more troops. News reports described a "[military-style](#)" raid in a South Shore apartment complex, where armed agents deployed flashbangs, forced entry, zip-tied residents — including children — and detained dozens of people without clear charges. According to [AP](#), federal agents used helicopters, chemical agents, and aggressive tactics during several operations across Cook County, fueling public outrage and calls for an independent investigation.

The DHS dismissed Pritzker's claims in an October 6 [statement](#). The agency called the allegations "categorically false" and "reckless." Responding to criticism that its agents had swept up U.S. citizens, the agency said its operations were "targeted." They reported the arrests of more than 1,000 undocumented individuals, including "pedophiles, kidnappers, gang members, and armed robbers."



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On Wednesday, Trump hinted he could invoke the Insurrection Act, which would allow him to deploy active-duty military forces domestically without a governor's consent. On Thursday, the administration [accused](#) Pritzker of "aiding and abetting violent criminals." A few hours later, following the court's freezing of National Guard deployment, Pritzker [celebrated](#) the ruling, noting that "there is no credible evidence of a rebellion in the state of Illinois."

The Law

Federal law is clear: Assaulting or obstructing federal officers is a crime under [18 U.S.C. §111](#). Yet states retain the right to control their own policing and to decline participation in federal immigration enforcement. In Illinois, that divide hardened into a standoff — each side claiming the Constitution, both pressing its limits.

At the same time, Trump's growing reliance on military force in domestic law enforcement pushed the limits of the [Posse Comitatus Act](#), which restricts the use of federal troops for civilian policing except under narrow exceptions.

It was the very dilemma Governor Stitt had warned about: When the federal government steps into a state without consent, the balance of American federalism begins to buckle.

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