

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas House of Representatives

May 22, 2009

Dear Friend:

The clock is quickly ticking away on the 81st legislative session. We have 10 days left before the legislature adjourns Sine Die and a great deal of important legislation to debate. Some of these important issues are mandatory photo ID for voters, the modification of the top 10 percent rule at universities, unemployment insurance, and the Department of Insurance sunset.

Currently on the House floor members opposed to Voter ID legislation are chubbing. "Chubbing" is a legislative term meaning stalling. They are starting with the 200 bills on the Local and Consent Calendar, which is exactly that -- measures that have met no opposition and are specific to regions of the state. They are supposed to move through the House quickly, but if questions are raised, they can be discussed for up to 10 minutes before the bill is knocked of the calendar. Members are choosing to speak for 9.5 minutes on each and every bill.

Voter ID

SB 362 has been set on tomorrow's house calendar. Every time an illegal vote is cast a law-abiding citizen loses their voice and their vote. The people's voice, expressed by voting, is the foundation of principles our country was built on. This celebrated right is essential to the groundwork of both our great state and country. With 12.7 million registered voters in the State of Texas, Texans not only have a major voice within our State Legislature, but also nationwide.

For this reason, many of my colleagues and I have worked diligently throughout the current session to ensure this essential right is protected by legislation that requires a valid photo identification to vote. Voters across all corners of Texas have called for action, with one recent poll finding 88% of Texans support the adoption of this legislation.

The findings of this poll are not surprising considering the importance for maintaining election integrity. As election margins narrow, it is crucial that each voter be accurately represented with one person one vote. By requiring photo identification to vote, Texans are assured their governmental representatives are elected by the people and can continue to be a voice for the people of Texas.

It is only by a commitment to the foundations of our great state that we, as Texans, continue to thrive. Legislation passed the Texas Senate with a significant majority, including the support of Lt. Governor David Dewhurst, and enjoyed bi-partisan support coming from the House Elections committee. However, our work is not done. It is important to fully debate this legislation on the House floor and to carefully consider each amendment that may be proposed. Some of these amendments could weaken the legislation while others may have a positive impact on our system.

I believe the United States Supreme Court's opinion regarding Arizona's Photo ID law sums it up best, "Confidence in the integrity of our electoral process is essential to the functioning of our participatory democracy." Therefore, as your State Representative I will continue to fight to protect one of our most sacred rights and seek to ensure the voice of the people is not suppressed.

Texas Department of Public Safety Sunset Bill

With the second Texas Department of Public Safety executive director resigning in less than a year, it was even more important to closely examine the function of the DPS. House Bill 2730 provided for a major overhaul of the agency.

The bill was a product of the Sunset Commission recommendations which were written last year on the heels of criticism of DPS for a June fire that severely damaged the Governor's Mansion, as well as the recent leadership lapses at the agency.

The state law enforcement agency operates on a billion-dollar state budget with more than 8,000 employees. After many amendments, some of which I supported and some that I did not, I felt comfortable voting for the bill. HB 2730 unanimously passed the house last week.

According to Representative Lois Kolcorst, author of the bill, "This bill offers sweeping changes. If passed, the bill creates an independent Inspector General who answers directly to the commission, instead of an agency supervisor. The bill not only helps our hard-working troopers protect the public and detect crime, but it also seeks to change the culture within DPS."

Other recommendations included in the legislation include a plan for a more customer-friendly drivers license office and new guidelines for the state's division of emergency management, which oversees disasters such as last year's Hurricane Ike.

The bill also proposes a shorter deadline until the next legislative review, pulling the agency back into the sunset review process after six years, instead of the usual twelve.

The legislation will move to the Senate where it will be sponsored by Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa

May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

On Monday May 18, I hosted the first Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Breakfast at the capitol in honor of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month this May. At the breakfast I had guests from the Asian American community across Texas including from our state's many Asian chambers of commerce. After the breakfast I passed House Resolution HR 1759 in honor of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, and I brought many of the guests from the breakfast, including people from our great district, to the House Floor to witness this event.



Back Row Left to Right: Dr. Ali Khataw (Austin Asian American Chamber of Commerce), Michael Huang (Houston Asian Chamber of Commerce), Ding Ke-Hwa, Rep. Angie Button, Peter Hwang (Chinese American Relief Effort), Rep. Hubert Vo, Vinh Trieu (Houston Asian Chamber of Commerce), Craig Blum (legislative aid for Rep.Button)

Front Row Left to Right: Theresa Chang , Xiaoman Lancaster, Melinda Rodriguez (Alamo Asian American Chamber of Commerce), Sary Cheng, and Meilan Wang (Maro Polo World Foundation)

Capitol Visits - Richardson High School Students



Representative Button with students visiting the capitol from the Richardson High School Law Magnet program along with their teacher Sara Hofeditz and Assistant Principal David Esparza

I am honored to represent you in the Texas House of Representatives. Please express your views on any issue that is important to you and I assure you, I will take your views and the views of every constituent in District 112 into consideration as I vote on legislation.

Sincerely,

Angie Chen Button

If you would like to be added or removed from this mailing, please e-mail
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