

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas
House of Representatives



February 18, 2011

Appropriations

This has been a very busy week for my Appropriations Sub-Committee. We are charged with examining the funding of many state agencies including the Office of the Governor, the Comptroller, The Attorney General, the Secretary of State and our judicial systems to name a few.

I appreciate all of the individuals, agencies, state employees, and elected officials who have taken the time to testify before the sub-committee and to meet with me and my staff. Although there is room to improve government efficiency and effectiveness through this difficult budgeting process, many painful cuts will have to be made in order to balance the budget.

One area that the state can work on, that is an issue throughout our system is the government subsidizing services versus charging them out to those who actually utilize the service. An example of this deficiency can be seen in the Attorney General's child support collection division. I favor a provision proposed in HB1 that assesses a "fee" which would cover the \$25 fee that the state remits to the federal government on the delinquent payer of child support payments. It goes without saying that overdue child support stresses families, not to mention welfare costs. There is a question of the costly process of collecting delinquent funds being shared equally among all citizens. I feel it is more appropriate to have those who are delinquent in their obligation to pay more of the states' bill to collect.

While there are some changes and cuts that seem relatively easy and will help make government function more efficiently, not all of the necessary cuts can be made by these adjustments alone. Education accounts for 41.4 % of all state spending in our current budget. Health and Human Services accounts for 32.7% and the Judiciary and Public Safety account for 6.3% of the budget. The remaining 20.6% of the budget is comprised of Regulated Industry, Natural Resources, General Government (The Governor's Office, Comptroller, Secretary of State, etc.) and the Legislature. What this means is, even if we stopped funding and totally zeroed out everything except Education, Health and Human Services, and Public Safety, we would still not be able to certify our budget without making cuts to those three areas given current budget projections.

We are working hard to minimize the effects of these cuts. In fact the percentage the state is proposing to spend on these three areas is not reduced. In the current proposed budget with the original recommended cuts, Education would account for 43.3% of the budget, Health and Human

Services 31.6% and the Judiciary and Public Safety would account for 7.1%. I appreciate all of you communicating with me during this difficult time about your individual needs and concerns and I promise I will do my best to ensure we pass a fair and balanced budget.



Here I am discussing the budget with Attorney General Greg Abbott before our 7:00 AM hearing.

Redistricting

Thursday, the state of Texas received the 2010 census data. The data is currently being verified and loaded onto our systems so we can begin taking a real look at how the districts will be laid out. We do know that the population of the State of Texas grew by 20.6% between 2000 and 2010. Because of this growth, there will be several changes to current districts.

Friendly Faces from Home

I was pleased to see Bill Sproull, President & CEO of both the Richardson Chamber of Commerce and Metroplex Technology Business Council. Paul Mayer, CEO of the Garland Chamber of Commerce and Board Member of the Texas Workforce Investment Council, was also in town this week. Dr. David Daniel, President of UT Dallas, was in Austin advocating for UTD. I enjoyed meeting with all of them to discuss technology, economic development, and higher education issues.



Pictured to my right is Jackie Davis, a Garland teacher and member of my Education roundtable.



Carolyn Johnson, Joyce Gibson, of Richardson, and Chandra Henson visited with me this week representing local credit unions.



I also met with optometrists from home. Pictured with me, from left to right, David Frazee. Bob Day (former Garland Mayor), Mindy Huynh and Jonathan Cargo.

It is an honor to serve as your State Representative. Please continue to communicate your views on issues that are important to you.

Sincerely,

Angie Chen Button

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