

# ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas  
House of Representatives



*March 4, 2011*

## Technology Committee

The House Committee on Technology held its inaugural meeting on Wednesday. We heard invited testimony from the Department of Public Safety about their measures to ensure that their databases are always available even during events such as the recent blackouts. A representative from the Governor's Office on the Emerging Technology Fund also spoke to us. This fund has brought many businesses and jobs to our area. It also provides grants for research at the University of Texas at Dallas. The Texas Department of Agriculture informed us about their efforts to extend broadband access to all of Texas. I am excited to be Vice Chair and look forward to the upcoming work of this committee.

## Emergency Legislation

Texas lawmakers can not consider legislation during the first 60 days of a session unless the governor declares that legislation an emergency. Here is a look at the five items that Governor Perry wants the Legislature to address immediately:

**Putting a stop to the practice of sanctuary cities that allow policies that impede the ability to enforce federal immigration laws.** I support ending sanctuary cities in Texas as part of a comprehensive approach to immigration reform and I am a co-author of HB 12 aimed at ending this practice in our state.

**Proof of photo identification to vote in public elections** was also designated by Governor Perry as an emergency item. The Texas Senate has already passed a voter identification bill and next week the House is expected to hear the legislation on the floor. Texas lawmakers are now well on our way to joining other states in passing this key piece of Voter I.D. legislation.

Governor Perry has also placed legislation expressing **Texas' desire for a balanced budget amendment to the US Constitution** on this session's fast track and it is joined by another critical issue, reforming eminent domain. These initiatives are very important to Texas and they will have my full support.

Additionally, Governor Perry has placed on the emergency items, legislation **requiring informed consent be given before a woman receives a voluntary abortion.** HB 12 was heard on the House Floor Wednesday and late into the night on Thursday. Informed consent legislation has already passed the Senate and has passed second reading in the House. I expect it to be passed on third reading Monday morning.

### **The Budget**

Although emergency items will be the first bills heard on the floor, I assure you that the state budget is not taking the backburner. As a member of the Appropriations committee, we are meeting from early in the morning until late into the evening to work through the many details of the budget process. Yesterday morning the full committee heard testimony from Comptroller Susan Combs to fully discuss the projected \$4.3 billion deficit for the current biennium. The Legislature, has very limited options: the use of the Rainy Day Fund, further reductions and cuts to spending, or deferring payments into the next biennium.

According to Comptroller Combs, "I don't know how you can get to \$4.3 billion in cuts." She warned that even if the recession ends, that doesn't mean revenues will return to levels seen in 2005, when the Texas economy was booming.

Although the Comptroller stated that the recession that began in 2007 was the worst since the Rainy Day Fund was created, she warned that lawmakers should think about the next four years, not just the next two, when considering how much of the fund to spend or how to fix a business tax that has never raised as much money as expected. She also pointed out that if lawmakers did not make funds available to cover the deficit, she is obligated under the state constitution to borrow money from the Rainy Day Fund to pay the state's bills.

Any move to use the Rainy Day Fund would have to be approved by two-thirds of the House.

### **Friendly Faces from Home**



**Austin College senior Alyssa Lee of Richardson visited the Capitol along with her classmates this week to discuss issues affecting college students.**



**Thursday was Republican Women's Day at the Capitol. I was able to meet and have lunch with these fine Richardson Women. Here I am with Nancy Sanders, Kathy Thomas, and Kerry Gaines.**

After leaving the Capitol at 10:00 pm last night, I caught a 6:30 am flight to flight back to House District 112 this morning. I stepped off the plane and began discussing issues with constituents. It feels good to be home! We had a wonderful session of roundtable meetings today and I look

forward to more discussions with constituents tomorrow. If I am not able to meet with you this weekend, please email me your views. I can be reached at [Angie.Button@house.state.tx.us](mailto:Angie.Button@house.state.tx.us).

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*

If you would like to be added or removed from this mailing, please e-mail [District112.Button@house.state.tx.us](mailto:District112.Button@house.state.tx.us).