

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas
House of Representatives



March 11, 2011

Government Efficiency

On Thursday, I laid out a bill in front of the House Committee on Government Efficiency and Reform. This bill, HB 679, will bring the dollar amount change order approval that can be delegated to administrators to \$50,000. By aligning cities with other entities, it helps vendors doing business with a variety of local governmental entities, levels cooperative purchasing agreements, and streamlines purchasing requirements under the \$50k dollar level. This legislation is good for the cities, good for vendors who want to do business with the city, and good for the public because city officials can spend more time on providing vital services to the community and less on unnecessary administrative efforts, and can keep projects to enhance the community moving forward. This bill does not affect policy for low bidders for contracts.

Constituent Roundtables

Last weekend I returned to the district to hold my first set of Constituent Roundtables for 2011. These roundtables are divided into different subject areas where constituents share their opinions, voice their concerns and provide their expertise. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to discuss pending legislation with such an informed and insightful group.

During the Multicultural Roundtable, we discussed Voter I.D. legislation. This group of legal immigrants and naturalized citizens discussed how valuable the right to vote was. The group said they would proudly show photo I.D. before casting a vote in order to protect their voice. The Public Safety Roundtable discussed budget issues and funding for state police and fire agencies. In the Business and Economic Development Roundtable, I talked with local business members about the state of the economy in our district. We discussed what the proposed budget cuts mean to economic development for our district.

The Education Roundtable yielded a very productive discussion. We discussed legislative proposals to give school districts more local control on how to handle budget shortfalls. I am thankful to have such dedicated education professionals and involved parents in our district. At the Energy Roundtable, we discussed last month's power outages during the severe winter weather. We also discussed how difficult it would be to replenish the Rainy Day Fund if legislators dip too far into it. In the Seniors Roundtable we discussed the progress on the 3rd Annual Senior Awareness Day that will take place this fall. The Health and Human Services

Roundtable discussed proposed legislation as well as potential effects budget cuts will have. Finally, in the Neighborhoods Roundtable we discussed legislation that would impact homeowners' associations, specifically the transfer of fees during foreclosure and the use of solar panels on homes.

I enjoyed meeting with constituents and hearing their views on the important issues of this session. If you would like to participate in these roundtables or if you have a specific concern or issue you would like us to work on, please let me know.

The Budget

In Appropriations this week, we continued our work in full committee and subcommittee going through the details of the budget. Additionally, this week we heard HB 4 and HB 275. These two pieces of legislation attempt to address our current \$4.3 billion deficit.

To address the deficit in the current budget, HB 4 takes a different approach than a typical supplemental bill. Supplemental bills are normally filed to address critical spending needs that arise during the interim and were not included in the current budget. HB 4 is different because in addition to paying for spending demands it also contains more than \$1.3 billion in spending cuts. Keep in mind, however, the \$1.3 billion is not a net number. It is offset by approximately \$700 million in current supplemental needs. The largest portion of which is \$600 million in direct payments to school districts.

HB 275 authorizes the use of \$4.3 billion from the economic stabilization fund (Rainy Day Fund) for the purpose of using that amount to make expenditures previously authorized for the state fiscal biennium ending August 31, 2011. In this bill, money from the Rainy Day Fund would not be used to balance the budget for the next biennium. That would still have to be achieved by cuts to spending. If passed, this bill allows the Rainy Day Fund to be used to plug the current hole in our budget. I would love to hear your thoughts on this proposed use of the Rainy Day Fund.

State Sovereignty

I attended a press conference this week in support of legislation that endorses the 10th Amendment and state sovereignty. The federal government has increasingly encroached on states' rights with mandates that Texans have not approved or endorsed. I am excited about passing this resolution and sending a clear message to Washington D.C. - **Don't Mess With Texas!**



Friendly Faces from Home



The Peteckis of Richardson stopped by in support of the Special Olympics. Here I am with Julia, Tekla and Les Peticki. Tekla will be competing this upcoming June in Greece.



This Wednesday was Richardson Day at the Capitol. I had the pleasure of seeing many Richardson folks from back home. Here I am with City Manager Bill Keffler, Councilman Steve Mitchell, Mayor Pro Tem Bob Townsend, David Morgan, Mayor Gary Slagel, Councilman Bob Macy, Councilman Mark Solomon and E.A. Hoppe.

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.