

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas
House of Representatives



April 15, 2011

Redistricting

State Board of Education

A new map for the 15-member Texas State Board of Education was heard on the floor on Thursday and passed the House with a 99-45 vote.

State Rep. Burt Solomons, who chairs the House Redistricting Committee, stated that the map created districts that were as compact and cohesive as possible, maintained communities of interest, and met the requirements of the Voting Rights Act.

This plan will now go to the Senate for approval.

Texas House of Representatives

Wednesday afternoon, the first map for redistricting of the Texas House was released. To see the map, click [here](#), then go to *Select Plans*, then *Base Plan*, then choose *Plan H113*.

From the floor on Wednesday, Rep. Solomons, thanked the Committee and the members for helping draw the map. He went on to state, "We have received public testimony from across the state at hearings and submitted written materials. I deeply appreciate everyone's participation," In a written statement we received, Chairman Solomons said, "The map we are proposing is a fair and legal map that represents the people of Texas and our growth over the last 10 years. And, I believe the members understand this growth resulted in some difficult decisions for me personally."

The Committee will hear public testimony on the proposed map today and Sunday. Then, the map will go to the House floor for a full debate where amendments will be offered. This map is a start, but will probably see some shifts before now and adoption. Ten years ago when our current district lines were drawn, each district contained approximately 139,000 people. Because of the growth in Texas, the ideal House district in the new map will now have a population of 167,637. Left alone, the districts are off with many seats being over the target population and many, such as

District 112, being under. Because each district does not exist in a vacuum, any shift in one, leads to a shift in the neighboring districts.

For purposes of determining your current district, the existing district boundaries for the state House and Senate remain in effect until the beginning of the legislative session in January 2013. The new district lines will be used in 2012 only for the purpose of determining the district boundaries for voters voting in the 2012 primary, primary run-off and the general election. Individuals elected to office in November 2012 will represent the newly configured districts when they are sworn into office in January 2013.

Eminent Domain-CSSB 18

The Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution, commonly referred to as the "Takings Clause," prohibits the taking of private property for public use without just compensation. Section 17, Article I, of the Texas Constitution, prohibits a person's property from being taken, damaged, or destroyed for or applied to public use without adequate compensation unless that person consents to the taking and only if the taking is for certain purposes. On Wednesday, the House heard CSSB 18 which took steps in the right direction toward increasing protections for property owners.

CSSB 18 would provide a balance between protections for private property owners and the needs of taxpayers. Texas was among the fastest-growing states over the last decade. With such large growth, comes the need for schools, roads, and utilities. While the vast majority of land is acquired without the need for eminent domain, it is important to protect those property owners who may not be happy with the initial offer to purchase their land. CSSB 18 would establish these protections without imposing unacceptable costs on Texas taxpayers.

The Budget

So far, I have discussed Public Education and Public Safety. I would like to dedicate some space in this newsletter to discuss Health and Human Services (HHS) in CSHB 1 which the house adopted earlier this month.

HHS, which is Article 2 in the budget, includes five agencies and is Texas' second-largest budget function after education. CSHB 1 appropriates 17.5% less than in fiscal year 2010-11. I realize that these programs provide valuable services to many Texans in need. Although these cuts are painful, they are a reflection of our current economic times and the resources we have available.

The large decrease in funds is due to the loss of \$5.7 billion in one-time federal stimulus funding used to support HHS programs last biennium and from administrative reductions and provider rate cuts. The bill includes a 10% spending cut in general revenue funds for Medicaid optional services.

CSHB 1 also directs HHS agencies to take steps to achieve the necessary savings by directing the agency to expand the use of Medicaid managed care throughout the state. Additionally, it instructs the agency to find \$450 million in savings using one or all of 13 initiatives which include payment restructuring, care management, and renegotiating more efficient contracts. Additional savings are achieved by closing one state-supported living center which will save the state \$10 million. \$18 million in savings in hospital facilities and services are achieved by increasing efficiencies and reducing acute care reimbursement. The agency will save an additional \$10 million by moving to privatize two state mental health hospitals.

A tremendous amount of work was done in Article 2 to efficiently use the funds we have available while minimizing the impact on those receiving services, and meeting the needs of our state. The Senate is currently working on this bill and will soon debate it on the floor of the Senate.

Friendly Faces from Home



Libby Pastor and Marty Strong of Richardson visited with me this week about issues affecting advanced practice nurses.



Realtors from all over the state gathered at the Capitol on Tuesday. I met with several realtors from Garland. Here I am with David Cox, Rodney Rowan, Kristy Osborn, Pam Crum, Greg Foster, Marilyn Frederick, and other realtors from the region.



Garland City Councilman John Willis stopped by this week as well. His daughter even served as a page for the day.



University of Texas at Arlington students visited the Capitol for a school project. Here I am with Bryan Moyish, of Garland, and his friend Aaron.

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 Buttan

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