

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas
House of Representatives



April 22, 2011

Friends,

It is the last week in April and the legislature still has much to do before we adjourn Sine Die on Monday, May 30th. Between now and then, the House and Senate must reconcile differences in the budget, we must pass several Sunset bills, and adopt redistricting plans for Congressional seats as well as the House and Senate seats.

In addition to these major bills that are working their way through the process, I am a joint author on the following pieces of legislation:

HB 176 - Designates English as the official language of this state.

HB 177 - Requires proof of citizenship or lawful presence in the United States for issuance of state issued identification such as a driver's license.

HJR 45 - Proposes a constitutional amendment to prohibit a state income tax or increase in a state income tax unless there is a two-thirds vote of the legislature to enact and then submit to the voters a law imposing an income tax or increasing that tax.

HB 3 - Imposes a sentence of life without parole on certain repeat sexual offenders. This bill passed the House last week.

HB 1000 - Sets up a formula for universities, such as UTD, for the distribution of funds from the from the National Research University Fund when the school achieves Tier 1 status.

Redistricting

On Wednesday, we debated the House redistricting map on the floor. After a marathon debate that went on 16 hours, the House adopted the plans around 3:00 a.m. Thursday morning. This is an important issue that affects the lives of every Texan. The House members took this responsibility seriously and every amendment and region were thoroughly discussed. Now the map will go to the Senate.

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Sunset

Today the House heard SB 1420, the TxDOT Sunset Bill. Every agency in Texas undergoes the Sunset process periodically. During the Sunset process, the agency is examined by the legislature to determine if its function is still necessary and how it can achieve its goals more efficiently. SB 1420 will continue TxDOT until September 1, 2015 then it will go through Sunset again. The bill made many changes to the operation of TxDOT and the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC). It prohibits a member of the TTC from accepting contributions for elected office and requires TxDOT to report annually on the completion of state transportation goals and major transportation projects. SB 1420 also creates an Inspector General and requires TxDOT to make all of their transportation plans accessible on the TxDOT website. Additionally, it requires TxDOT to create a transportation expenditure reporting system and requires them to develop a policy that encourages public involvement with the TTC.

Among other changes, it requires the TTC document all public comments regarding environmental impact statements and present them during an open meeting of the TTC and on the department's website. It transfers TxDOT's functions regarding oversize and overweight vehicles to the Department of Motor Vehicles. These changes to TxDOT will allow it to operate more efficiently and transparently. An amendment, which I opposed, to add an additional 5¢ to the state motor fuels taxes was withdrawn from debate due to a lack of support. I was pleased the House adopted an amendment by Chairman Phillips to allow local entities to enter into comprehensive development agreements to address local congestion concerns.

Commission for Women

This week Governor Rick Perry and the Governor's Commission for Women hosted a luncheon honoring the women of the legislature. The Commission for Women is dedicated to helping women of all ages live healthier, more productive and more prosperous lives. I was honored to be a part of the program by leading my female colleagues and fellow Honorary Girl Scout Troop 1920 members in the Girl Scout promise at the luncheon.



Here I am with Girl Scouts Central Texas CEO, Etta Moore, recognizing the members of Honorary Girl Scout Troup 1920, made up of the female legislators. I also serve as co-chair of this Troop.

Friendly Faces from Home



Tony and Tillie Battaglia of the Oakridge community in Garland came down to Austin this week to visit with me and my staff about an issue in the district.

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
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