

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas
House of Representatives



June 24, 2011

Dear Friends:

This special session is drawing to a close. We plan to adjourn sine die on Wednesday, June 29th however, there is still much to be done before then. Several important pieces of legislation are currently in conference committee while differences between the House and Senate versions are worked out and are expected to be eligible on the House Floor on Monday. These include SB 1 and SB 2, the fiscal matters bills needed to balance our state budget, as well as SB 8 relating to flexibility for schools districts and public school finance. HB 41, the bill designed to reduce intrusive pat-downs by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) at airports, is also on the calendar for Monday. Please continue to communicate your thoughts on these and any other issue.

HB 79

This week the House passed HB 79, the judicial fiscal matters bill. HB 79 increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the Texas court system and brings simplicity and rationality to the legal process by reforming the organization and administration of our court system. It makes it easier for local courts to exchange cases, dockets, and benches, helping courts to address problems in judicial workloads. This legislation also streamlines the kinds of cases Statutory County Courts can take by expanding the limit from \$100,000 to \$200,000 to ease some of the caseload burden of local district courts. It creates the Judicial Committee for Additional Resources, which would provide assistance on the request of trial courts, for particularly massive, complex, and burdensome cases.

HB 79 abolishes small claims courts and transfers those disputes to the jurisdiction of Justice of the Peace (JP) Courts. The JPs would resolve these cases based on a system of rules to be drafted by the Texas Supreme Court.

In addition, this legislation allows counties with two or more district courts to transfer cases from one district court to another and grants district courts original jurisdiction in civil matters greater than \$500. It also requires that all district judges within a county be paid equal amounts of supplemental compensation from the county, and prohibits statutory county court judges from the private practice of law. Moreover, it requires statutory county court judges and statutory probate judges to be U.S. citizens and allows associate judges in child protection and child support family courts to carry handguns in court if they have concealed handgun permits.

These changes HB 79 makes, reflect changes suggested by the Judicial Council and the State Bar of Texas. HB 79 represents an investment in the court system of our state. As the population and economy of Texas grow, so will the need for an efficient and rational system of courts. This legislation's reforms are geared toward creating more efficient and uniform justice across our state.

Please Save the Date
Third Annual District 112 Senior Awareness Day
Saturday, August 6, 2011
9:30 AM - 12:30 PM
Richardson Civic Center, Grand Hall
411 W. Arapaho Rd.
Richardson, Texas 75080

Dallas Area Agency on Aging benefits counselors will be available to answer questions and provide assistance on Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

There will be entertainment, refreshments, exhibitors and door prizes. I hope you can join us for this fun and informative event. If you have any questions, please call 972-234-8980 or e-mail me at Angie.Button@house.state.tx.us.

It is an honor to serve as your representative in the Texas House. Please let me know if I can ever be of assistance.

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.