

# ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas  
House of Representatives



*January 25, 2013*

Friends,

Things are well underway in Austin. Next week the Speaker's office is expected to announce committee assignments. On Tuesday, the Governor will be delivering the State of the State address from the House floor. I encourage you to follow the 83rd legislative session by visiting <http://www.house.state.tx.us>.

## Educating Our Youth

Public education will be a major issue during this legislative session. We will be monitoring the latest court case on school funding as we consider policies for educating the state's 5 million school children. The Legislature will also consider proposals to expand school choice, including the use of vouchers to offset the cost of private school tuition and to potentially expand open enrollment policies for some Texas students.

I have heard from my Education Roundtable members that the testing requirements imposed by the state are excessive and actually hinder classroom learning. This session, lawmakers will consider altering the requirement that students' end-of-course exam scores account for 15% of their final course grade. We will also discuss scaling back the newest state-mandated testing requirements under the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) program. In addition, lawmakers may consider revising the high school curriculum to allow more career and technical classes to count toward graduation requirements. As a member of the Interim Committee on Manufacturing and the Select Committee on Economic Development, I heard testimony from business leaders and economic development professionals discussing how important a skilled workforce is to our economy and how we are currently not doing enough in this area. I look forward to finding ways to give our students more opportunities to achieve their dreams and to provide a work force qualified to meet business demands so our state's economy will continue to grow.

## Texas Education Agency

In 1977, the Texas Legislature created the Sunset Advisory Commission to identify and eliminate waste, duplication, and inefficiency in government agencies. The 12-member Commission reviews the policies and programs of more than 150 government agencies every 12 years. The Commission

questions the need for each agency, looks for potential duplication of other public services or programs, and considers new and innovative changes to improve each agency's operations and activities. The Commission seeks public input through hearings on every agency under Sunset review and recommends actions on each agency to the full Legislature. In most cases, agencies under Sunset review are automatically abolished unless legislation is enacted to continue them.

This session the Texas Education Agency (TEA) will undergo Sunset review. Sunset staff have recommended several changes that the Legislature may consider. Proposals include:

- Transferring adult education funds oversight from TEA to the Texas Workforce Commission
- Transferring regulation of the private driver training industry to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation
- Granting TEA greater authority to merge insolvent school districts and over low-performing charter schools
- Implementing a ban on nepotism hires at charter schools
- Abolishing the State Board for Educator Certification and transferring its powers and duties to the Commissioner of Education

There are many proposed changes and more discussions to be had regarding education in our state. I appreciate you communicating your thoughts on this matter as we work to move our state forward.



**Pictured with my Capitol hall mates from the top left, Representatives J.M. Lozano, Allen Fletcher, Larry Gonzales, and Stefani Carter seated next to me.**

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  
[Angie.Button@house.state.tx.us](mailto:Angie.Button@house.state.tx.us).