

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas
House of Representatives



March 8, 2013

Friends,

Happy Friday! Today is the 60th day of the 83rd legislative session and the deadline to file bills. As of 1:15 today, 3,487 House bills have been filed. The pace around the Capitol is going to pick up substantially as we start hearing bills on the House floor. If there is legislation filed that you support or oppose, I encourage you to contact my office and let us know. You can examine the bills that have been filed by visiting www.house.state.tx.us.

Ways and Means

The Ways and Means committee began hearing bills on Monday. Representative Lyle Larson filed several pieces of legislation related to the distribution of the sales and use tax on sporting goods. These bills were aimed at restoring funding to our parks programs and Richardson's own Councilman Mark Solomon and Assistant City Manager David Morgan were here to show their support for this initiative and to discuss how these funds have benefited our community. In addition to the discussions on parks funding, we heard legislation related to the exemption of motor vehicle sales and use tax for military servicemembers on active duty.



With Richardson's David Morgan and Councilman Mark Solomon before the Ways and Means hearing.

Technology

This week in the Technology Committee, we heard our first bills this session. The first three were very similar and would allow drivers in Texas to show proof of insurance to officers on their smart phone as another option to the traditional paper proof of insurance. In another attempted move from paper to electronic copies, Technology Chairman Gary Elkins brought forward a bill that would allow county clerks to provide information, such as marriage handbooks, on their websites to those that apply for a marriage license.

State of the Judiciary

On Wednesday, Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson of the Texas Supreme Court delivered his biennial State of the Judiciary Address to the House and the Senate. He called for more funding for civil legal aid, juvenile justice reform, and pushed for the establishment of an innocence commission to investigate wrongful convictions. Jefferson said, "Wrongful convictions leave our citizens vulnerable, as actual perpetrators remain free." He urged the Legislature to establish the commission to investigate each instance of exoneration, to assess the likelihood of wrongful convictions in future cases, and to establish statewide reforms. Lastly, Jefferson announced that the Texas Judicial Council was creating a special committee that would work towards reforming the state's guardianship system. This system allows court appointees to manage the interests of incapacitated individuals.

Garland Chamber of Commerce Day

This Tuesday, I was pleased to have members of the Garland Chamber of Commerce visit their Capitol. I prepared HR 676 recognizing March 5, 2013, as Garland Chamber of Commerce Day at the State Capitol and recognized them in the House gallery. I also enjoyed discussing their legislative priorities and sharing my goals for the session with them. It is so nice to see friendly faces from the district come to the Capitol. Garland is my hometown and a wonderful community of over 225,000 residents that CNN and Money Magazine ranked as the 67th best place to live in the United States. It is well served by the Garland Chamber of Commerce and is a manufacturing and economic powerhouse in North Texas.



With Garland Chamber of Commerce board member Kevin Slay to my right and Garland Chamber of Commerce CEO Paul Mayer to my left at my office.

Richardson Telecom Corridor Legislative Days

It was a pleasure to see the delegation from the Richardson Chamber of Commerce, City of Richardson, Richardson ISD, and UT Dallas visit Austin this week. I enjoyed their legislative dinner Tuesday evening and hearing Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson speak. On Wednesday, I joined them for an early breakfast and then recognized them in the House gallery and presented them with HR 303 recognizing March 6, 2013, as Richardson's Telecom Corridor Legislative Day. I also arranged for them to visit with Texas Supreme Court Justice Don Willett in the afternoon. It was great to discuss their legislative agenda, which included the Cotton Belt project, R&D tax credits, and education funding. Richardson is a fantastic city of over 100,000 residents and a hub for telecommunications, technology, and financial services businesses in North Texas. It is the International Business Capital of North Texas and is well served by the Richardson Chamber of Commerce, which is one of only two chambers in the nation with both a five star rating by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and recognition as an Accredited Economic Development Organization by the International Economic Development Council.



The Capitol hosted “Arts Education Day” to promote fine arts in schools. Two choir groups visited from the district. Garland ISD’s Austin Academy visited and performed on the Capitol steps and here I am pictured with the Sachse High School choir who performed in the Capitol rotunda.

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.