

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas
House of Representatives



March 25, 2013

Friends,

March Madness is upon us! I apologize for sending the newsletter out a few days late. I spent Thursday evening and the rest of the weekend in HD 112 meeting with constituents. This will be a busy week as the House plans to hear important legislation involving the way we educate our children in HB 5. Additionally, the House plans to take up HB 4 which deals with creating the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) to address our state's water needs. If you have any input you would like to provide into these matters, please contact me soon so I will have your information before I vote.

Retired Teachers' Day at the Capitol

Wednesday was Texas Retired Teachers' Day at the Capitol. It was wonderful meeting with former teachers from all over our district. Also this week, I signed on as a co-author to HB 1383 which would raise the state contribution to the Teacher Retirement Systems fund that serves as the only retirement plan for many teachers in Texas. I appreciate the work that educators do for the children in our state.



Nancy and Tom Rohm of Texas Retired Teachers Association of Richardson visited Austin this week

Economic Development

I had the opportunity to lay out my two Research and Development (R&D) bills this past Monday before committee. During the interim, I was appointed to serve on the Select Committee on Economic Development and on the Interim Committee on Manufacturing. In both committees, I heard from numerous witnesses about the importance of R&D and how Texas is falling behind in this area.

Currently, Texas is one of the 7 states that does not provide any form of R&D credit. R&D is an important part of our economy because companies engaged in these activities often experience growth which brings an infusion of jobs, economic activity, and additional tax revenue. The two pieces of legislation that I filed this session, in an attempt to keep Texas competitive in recruiting and keeping major employers to our state, are HB 414 and HB 953. HB 414 was heard in Ways and Means. This bill would provide a franchise tax credit to companies engaged in R&D activities in our state. HB 953 was heard before the Manufacturing Sub-committee which is a part of the Economic Development Committee. This bill provides a credit for companies that contract their R&D activities to a Texas institute of higher learning. Both pieces of legislation are currently pending in committee.

Public Utilities Commission

Last Wednesday, the Texas House heard and debated HB 1600, the Public Utility Commissions sunset bill. The bill was created after a three-year period in which the Texas Sunset Commission reviewed the Commission to weed out inefficiencies and to increase effectiveness. Some of the provisions of the bill include merging water and wastewater management into the PUC and out of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Additionally, it allows the PUC to more quickly issue "cease and desist" orders to energy producers in order to protect the public in emergency conditions. For example, the bill would allow the PUC to intervene if an energy supplier is about to turn off an elderly person's power during conditions of extreme heat. An amendment was added to the bill to clarify that the PUC does not have the authority to turn off an individual's power. After much debate and considering the bill was thoroughly and thoughtfully vetted in consultation with consumers and industry, I voted yes on this bill.

Constituent Roundtables

Last weekend, I returned to the district to hold my first set of Constituent Roundtables for 2013. These Roundtables are divided into different subject areas where constituents share their opinions, voice their concerns and provide their expertise. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to discuss pending legislation with such an informed and insightful group.

In the Business and Economic Development Roundtable, I talked with local business members about the state of the economy in our district. The Education Roundtable yielded a very productive discussion. We discussed legislative proposals on testing, accountability, charter schools, and other issues. I am thankful to have such dedicated education professionals and involved parents in our district. At the Energy Roundtable, we discussed legislation on oil and gas pipelines, unitization, and solar energy. In the Seniors Roundtable, we discussed the progress on the 5th Annual Senior Awareness Day that will take place this August. Finally, in the Neighborhoods Roundtable we discussed legislation that would impact homeowners' associations.

Although things are hectic in Austin, it is so important for me to visit with the real people of HD 112. I am so grateful for each of you who took the time to meet with me to make sure I am accurately representing the views of our community. If you would like to participate in these Roundtables or if you have a specific concern or issue you would like us to work on, please let me know.



Here I am with the members of my Health & Human Services Roundtable. From left to right are: Steve Killen with the City of Garland Health Department, Abel Hernandez (front) with Metrocare Services, Garland City Councilman Rick Williams (back), me (front), Richard Briley (back) with the City of Garland Health Department, Steve Harris, dietician Araceli Vazquez (front), chiropractor Dr. Lawrence Smith (back), and Jason Chessher with the City of Garland Health Department.

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.