

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas
House of Representatives



April 5, 2013

Friends,

This week the House took up the state budget, SB 1. On Thursday, Chairman of Appropriations Jim Pitts stated in his opening remarks, “Two years ago we passed a budget that enacted some of the most significant funding cuts in our history to balance a budget in the face of a \$27 billion revenue shortfall.” Thanks to our pro-business policies, our state’s economic growth, and our financial health, we have been able to restore some of last session’s cuts. We did not do so recklessly, and we did not replace every dollar that was removed during last session.

The House debated the budget and the 270 amendments for close to 12 hours, and, for the first time in over 20 years, the budget was passed before midnight. This was possible because of strong leadership and the ability for members to communicate openly and honestly with each other throughout the process. This budget fully funds our needs for the entire 2014-2015 biennium unlike the 2012-2013 biennium which included several deferrals to balance the budget. The budget increases total spending by about 2.1% and General Revenue spending by about 7%. This increase is below estimated growth in population and inflation. SB 1 stays below the constitutional spending limit and is funded within available revenue without using the Rainy Day Fund. Now the budget will go to conference committee, where the Senate and the House will try to reconcile the differences between the chambers. I will briefly highlight some of the major areas of spending within the budget.

Public Education

- Increases funding for education by \$2.7 billion, an 8.6% increase
- Funds enrollment growth
- Increases the state's contribution to Teacher Retirement System (TRS) by \$147 million

Higher Education

- Increases financial aid programs by \$175 million, including a \$150 million increase for Texas Grants
- Provides a 3% formula funding increase (on top of enrollment growth) for all institutions including community colleges
- Increases the Texas Competitive Knowledge Fund by \$59 million

Health and Human Services

- Provides a \$265 million increase for mental health programs including an extension of services to more than 6,000 adults and almost 300 children on waiting lists
- Adds \$100 million for women's health services
- Increases funding for Child Protective Services to reduce delinquent investigations and lower caseloads to 2009 levels
- Fully funds projected caseloads for Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and foster care programs



Pictured with Mike Ryalls and Jeff Hurt from the American Collector's Association in my Capitol office. Mr. Ryalls owns a call center located in Richardson that employs a couple hundred people.

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.