

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas
House of Representatives



May 3, 2013

Friends,

Happy Friday! As the 83rd legislative session speeds up even more, I wanted to follow up on my discussion of HB 11 from last week. HB 11 was laid out on the floor on Monday. A point of order, which is a procedural error, was raised on the bill which caused it to be sent back to committee. The clock is ticking and starting tomorrow, the House will be meeting on the weekends as May 9th is the last day House bills can be debated on the floor. Governor Perry has stated that he will call a special session if the legislature does not fund our water needs during the regular session.

Tax Relief

Thanks to vaccines, millions of Texans are alive and healthy. Vaccines prevent diseases and are required for our children to attend public schools. As most of us know, physician practices are primarily owned by small businessmen and women. Because of our state's current Margins Tax structure, physicians are able to deduct either compensation or the cost of goods sold. Physicians, like most "service industry" businesses, deduct compensation expenses and pay a 1% tax on all other costs, including the purchase of vaccines. For example, the typical flu vaccine costs around 15 dollars. The labor cost of administering the vaccine is deductible, but the vaccine itself is not. Even if the insurer pays enough to cover the purchase cost of the vaccine, a 1% tax means that a physician loses money every time he or she gives a vaccine.

I filed HB 1310 to remedy the situation by allowing a physician practice to exclude from total revenue the actual cost paid by the taxable entity for a vaccine. This bill passed the House on Monday and is now in the Senate. In addition to HB 1310, I authored and co-authored several bills to provide additional tax relief to Texans that I will discuss in more depth as they move through the process.

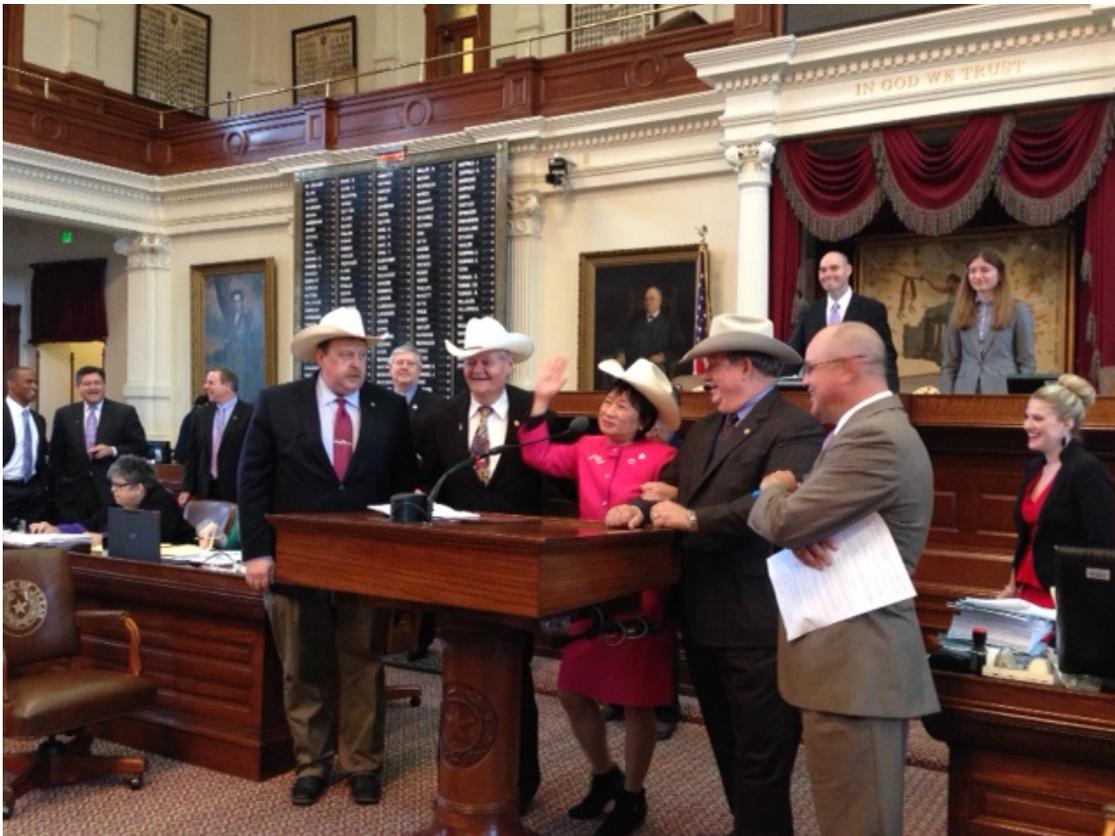
Using Technology to Make Government More Efficient

Most of us are familiar with videoconferencing and use it in our personal or professional lives. Before this session, there were few policies in place to adequately address ways technology could be used to make government more effective and efficient. I authored HB 2414 to address this.

The bill is strictly permissive and will keep our state moving forward by letting entities that choose to, adopt policies that will allow them to use videoconferencing to conduct open meetings. HB 2414 lets a member of a governmental body attend, be counted present, and participate in an open meeting by way of videoconferencing if participation is broadcast at the physical location and open to the public. This becomes particularly beneficial when examining the various boards and commissions in Texas that are currently required to travel across the state for regular meetings. With the passage of this bill, members can save taxpayer dollars by reducing travel expenses. HB 2414 passed the House on Wednesday and is currently awaiting Senate approval.

Garland Named the Official "Cowboy Hat Capitol of Texas"

On Thursday, the House passed HCR 96 designating Garland as the "Cowboy Hat Capital of Texas." Garland is home to the largest manufacturers of cowboy hats in the state. In 1938, due to the increasing demand for Resistol cowboy hats, a factory was opened in Garland. Today, that company is Hatco Inc., which is one of the largest employers in the city, employing almost 400. They produce such well-known brands of hats like Resistol, Stetson, Wrangler, and Charlie 1 Horse. Other cowboy hat companies in Garland include Milano Hat Company, Master Hatters of Texas, and Dallas Hats. Garland manufactures well over 1 million hats per year and ships them all around the world. Once it passes the Senate, HCR 96 will then need to be signed by the Governor to be made law. Below, several of my colleagues joined me in donning cowboy hats to show their support.





The Walker family, my neighbors in Garland, visited the Capitol this week. Here I am with Norma Walker and her children from left to right: Lucy, David, Sadie and Daisy. Sadie and Daisy helped with errands at the Capitol as Honorary Pages of the Day.

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.