

# ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas  
House of Representatives



*September 4, 2015*

Friends,

Children and teachers are back at school and the weather is starting to cool off. I hope everyone enjoys a safe Labor Day on Monday. Teachers, I would love to hear from you. If you have ideas that would make the school year run smoother for you, or if you would like for me or a member of my team to come visit your classroom, please let me know. You can email me at [Angie.Button@house.state.tx.us](mailto:Angie.Button@house.state.tx.us).

Almost 700 new laws passed in the 84th Session of the Texas Legislature went into effect on September 1, if not already in effect. Please note that Open Carry Legislation is not effective until January of 2016.

## **Public Education**

The budget approved during the 84th legislature included an additional \$1.5 billion allotted to public education compared with the last budget. Currently, the Texas Supreme Court is hearing a lawsuit from 2011 where districts sued the state after the state cut \$5.4 billion from public education to help balance a post-recession budget shortfall. It has been argued that the legislature is violating its constitutional duty to provide an adequate and efficient public school system by enacting large cuts. Since making those cutbacks, the legislature has added back more than 90 percent of what was cut while also enacting policy measures aimed at reducing the burden on student performance.

While we are waiting for the Supreme Court to rule, the legislature has been working hard to reform public education. HB 1706 requires the education commissioner to eliminate any reports and paperwork required by state law that duplicates the content of those required by federal law. This bill will hopefully save our districts some time and money allowing them to function in a more efficient manner.

HB 4 sets aside \$118 million over two years for school districts that agree to bolster their pre-K programs geared toward students from low-income, non-English-speaking, foster and military families. The districts would have to meet certain teacher quality and curriculum measures before they could receive the funding.

Implementing A-F grades for schools passed through HB 2804. This bill made broader changes to how the state evaluates schools, including bringing in factors like community engagement, Advanced Placement course enrollment, attendance and dropout rates. Under the new bill, student performance on state standardized exams would remain the primary measure of school performance, however, it would no longer be as dominant a factor in determining a school's accountability rating.

### **Senior Awareness Day**

Last month, we held our Seventh Annual Senior Awareness Day at the Richardson Civic Center. We had over 55 exhibitors with services, products, and resources geared towards seniors available at the event as well as 5 different entertainment groups, refreshments, and door prizes. Hundreds of senior citizens from Garland, Richardson, Sachse, Rowlett, and other surrounding communities came out to take advantage of the amazing opportunities to converse with exhibitors and find out about local resources available to them. Many also took the time to just enjoy the entertainment and fun of the morning in the company of other senior citizens. We were excited to see a full bus of Sachse seniors arrive to join the fun. State Representative Linda Koop stopped by the event to meet with friends and neighbors, and to enjoy the festivities. From Richardson, we were joined by Mayor Paul Voelker and Councilman Bob Townsend. We were also joined by Garland Councilmembers Stephen Stanley and Anita Goebel along with Rowlett Councilmembers Tammy Dana-Bashian and Debby Bobbitt. Special thanks to the City of Richardson for providing such a wonderful venue for the event, and to the wonderful committee of volunteers that made the entire event possible.



**With Ms. Dorothy Hall-Barnes who was honored at Senior Awareness Day for being active in the community at 104 years old.**

### **Around the District**

In addition to our Senior Awareness Day event, I was active around the district visiting with other groups. I attended an Atmos Energy employee appreciation event where I was happy to speak to everyone there. I also continued touring the area giving different groups a recap of the bills and activities that transpired in the 84th legislative session. Just this morning I joined my Senate and House colleagues, Sen. Bob Hall, Sen. Don Huffines, and Rep. Cindy Burkett to address members of the Rowlett Chamber of Commerce at their legislative breakfast. If you would like for me to visit your group to recap and review the past legislative session, please do not hesitate to contact my office.



**I was happy to speak with the Rowlett Chamber of Commerce members at their Legislative Breakfast where I was joined by my colleagues: Sen. Bob Hall, Sen. Don Huffines, and Rep. Cindy Burkett**

It is an honor to serve as your State Representative. Please contact me 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).