

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas
House of Representatives



October 10, 2016

Friends,

I hope everyone is enjoying the cooler temperatures. As things cool down outside, they are starting to heat up in Austin as we prepare for the upcoming legislative session. My office is hard at work preparing legislation to improve the lives of Texans. If you have an idea you would like to see become law, please let me know by emailing Angie.Button@house.texas.gov.

Ways & Means

This month, the Ways & Means Committee held an interim hearing to discuss interim charges. At the hearing, we heard testimony on the following charges:

1. Review aspects of the property tax system that contribute to rising property tax levies and taxpayer dissatisfaction. Examine whether the current system allows taxpayers meaningful participation in determining local property tax rates. Explore changes to the appraisal process that could improve the accuracy of appraisals.
2. Assess the impact of a repeal of the franchise tax on the state's economy and on revenue stability for state government. The assessment should include a dynamic analysis of the economic impact.
3. Assess the impact of ongoing tax litigation, including *American Multi-Cinema, Inc. v. Hegar*, on the state's revenue stability.
4. Examine whether issues raised in the State Auditor's review of Chapter 313 agreements warrant action by the Legislature to improve accountability, transparency, and compliance. Examine special issues raised by Chapter 313 projects covering more than one school district. Chapter 313 agreements are local property tax abatements used to recruit business.
5. Assess the competitiveness of Texas's tax structure for marine goods and services as compared to other states.
6. Monitor implementation of the increased residence homestead exemption as approved by the voters in Proposition 1 (SJR 1 (84R)). Determine the amount of property tax relief for homeowners, taking into account increases in appraisals and local property tax rates.

Additionally, determine the cost to the state to make up the revenue loss for school districts.

This was a very insightful hearing as we began our discussions with a general revenue update on the just-concluded fiscal year 2016. Performance was 1.9% below expectation. We were told, that despite projections being low, our current budget still works because of the amount of unappropriated funds that were originally left on the table by the 2015 Legislature. This was an important reminder that we must maintain fiscal discipline when preparing the budget and any potential tax relief for the upcoming session.

Although Texas has experienced a hit with declining oil prices, we have weathered better than other states that have a large oil industry as a result of economic diversity. I remain committed to keeping our economy strong and to working to find ways to lighten the load on individual taxpayers.

Around the District

I hope everyone enjoyed their Labor Day last month! I was excited to participate again in this year's Garland Labor Day Parade hosted by the Noon Exchange Club of Garland. I had the opportunity to meet many retired teachers at the Garland Retired School Personnel meeting that I attended with my community liaison, and former teacher, Pam Stoneham.

The Dallas Chinese Community Center held their annual banquet in September, and I was honored to attend. The Dallas Regional Chamber of Commerce hosted an 85th legislative session preview with House Speaker Joe Straus that touched upon a few of the issues that will probably show up next session. I always have a great time at the NAACP Freedom Brunch and was glad to be able to support this organization again this year. The Richardson Citizen Police and Fire Alumni Association had their picnic last month and I appreciated being invited to attend and celebrate with everyone. I was pleased to attend the DFW Asian American Chamber of Commerce annual banquet which honored local police departments as a part of their program. Garland police were also recognized for the service to our community at the Mid-Autumn Festival where I was happy to join in celebrating our public protectors.



Pictured with attendees of the Richardson Citizen Police & Fire Alumni Association's Picnic.

The National Center for Policy Analysis hosted the Sumner's Public Policy Weekend back in September, and I was pleased to join a panel on the Obligations of Citizenship. The panel was attended by college students from colleges and universities all over the state and I enjoyed giving my perspective on the privileges and responsibilities that come with citizenship. Later, I participated in the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute's Technology Policy Summit Panel where I happily gave my views on the state of Texas's technology industry. Last week I was happy to celebrate National Night Out with many of my neighbors and friends in Richardson and Garland.



Celebrating National Night Out with Richardson Police Chief Jim Spivey, Congressman Pete Sessions and Mayor Paul Voelker.

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.texas.gov