

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas House of Representatives



February 8, 2019

Friends,

On Tuesday, Governor Abbott delivered his biennial State of the State address. He opened his address discussing many of our great state's achievements including our state's healthy economic growth. The governor declared five emergency items.

- 1.) School finance reform and increasing teacher pay
- 2.) Property tax system reform
- 3.) School safety
- 4.) Improving emergency preparedness, disaster response, and recovery
- 5.) Legislation relating to the Texas Mental Health Care Consortium

By declaring something an emergency item, the governor can highlight his policy agenda but it also has an impact on the rules governing the legislative process. The Texas Legislature meets for 140 days every two years. A great deal goes into passing a bill. The first 60 days of a regular session, we are barred from passing legislation. Legislators can draft bills, meet with stakeholders, and hold committee hearings on legislation, but we can not actually vote on it unless it is declared an emergency by the governor. With emergency items, we can speed up the process on legislation

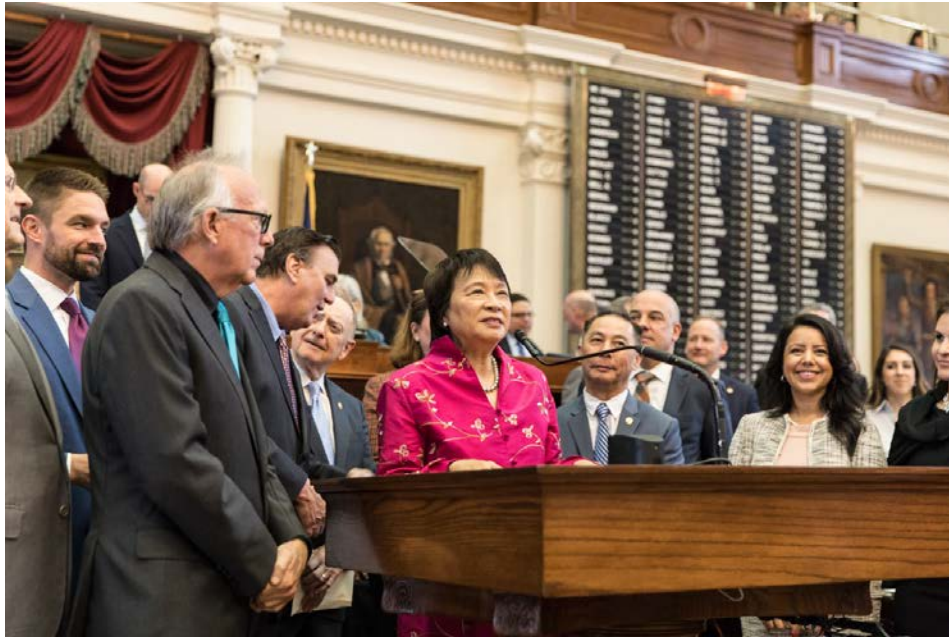
relating to the issues declared an emergency by the governor. This accelerated approach is permitted but is not required.

I am very pleased with the issues Governor Abbott placed as priorities by declaring them an emergency. The academic proficiency of our students in public schools is vital to the strength of our state. Many of you have expressed concerns with property taxes and our overreliance on local taxes to fund education. In today's reality, school safety must be a priority. The horrific and unthinkable act of violence at Santa Fe High School forever changed our state. It is our responsibility to provide policy and funding to help support our local ISDs as they work to protect our students. The natural disasters that have hit our state have demonstrated the strength and resiliency of Texans. It is impossible to predict every disaster that may impact our state but we can learn from the past to better implement strategies and procedures to improve future disaster response. Mental Health in our state is an area needing attention. The impact of mental health issues are far reaching as they have implications when discussing school safety, city and county finances as well as our judicial system and beyond.

I think all Texans can agree that these issues are of vital importance to the health and prosperity of our great state. We will spend the next 108 days working to reach consensus on the best way to address these matters as well as the many other concerns that are important to our region and state.



Richardson Police Dept. Chief Spivey and Fire Chief Poovey met with me this week to discuss legislation being discussed in Austin and its potential impact on Richardson. I appreciate these gentlemen, along with Police Captain Tittle (not pictured) and all they do to keep our community safe.



Lunar New Year was Tuesday. It was wonderful to celebrate with my colleagues on the House Floor. I wish each of you a healthy and prosperous Year of the Golden Pig.

Sincerely,

Angie Chen Button

If you would like to be added or removed from this mailing, please e-mail
Angie.Button@house.texas.gov