

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas House of Representatives



March 29, 2019

Friends,

This week the House considered the state's two year operating budget. We started the twelve-hour debate by discussing SB 500. I am proud to have voted for SB 500, the state's supplemental budget bill which funded a 13th check for retired teachers, devoted \$2.7 billion for Hurricane Harvey recovery, and made significant investments in women's healthcare and school safety.

After adopting SB 500, we moved on to HB 1, the budget bill for the next biennium. HB 1 stays below the constitutional spending limits and the growth of population-plus-inflation. We funded our state's highest priorities while remaining responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. I am incredibly proud of our work on this bill which was unanimously passed to fund school finance reform, property tax relief, and school safety. Additionally, this budget funds improvements in mental health services and takes steps to combat human trafficking. I was very proud to offer an amendment to the budget to provide funds to the Department of Public Safety for the purpose of testing the over 2,000 rape kits that are currently backlogged. I also passed an amendment to

provide funds to the Nurse-Family Partnership. The program works to improve mothers' pregnancy health, their child's health, and their families' economic self-sufficiency. Programs like the Nurse-Family Partnership save lives and taxpayer dollars.



Discussing my Amendments to HB 1 with Appropriations Chairman and Bill Author John Zerwas.

Constituent Roundtables

Last week, I traveled back home to the district for our mid-session constituent roundtables. I enjoyed being back in the district and was eager to hear from many friends in the community on issues we are working on in Austin.

We discussed a variety of topics relating to Health and Human Services, Education, Business and Economic Development, Energy and Natural Resources, and Seniors. Additionally, we held our inaugural urban affairs, young professionals, and women's roundtables. These roundtables bring together those involved with the industry, local leaders, and concerned citizens to voice their opinions and share their knowledge on each issue.

We had a great turnout and all topics yielded great discussion. I appreciate everyone that came out on Friday and Saturday to give me their input on legislation that is currently making its way through the legislative process. Your feedback is vital as we move forward in the 86th legislative session.

If you would like to join in on the discussions at one of our roundtables, please don't hesitate to contact me or my office for more information.



At the Urban Affairs Roundtable, we had a very productive conversation with local officials, community leaders, and concerned constituents about housing, improving local partnerships, and other important issues facing our communities.

Higher Education

The Higher Education Committee heard testimony on legislation addressing a number of important issues including hazing, homeless student policies, and tuition exemption. Additionally, HB 2000 by Higher Education Chairman Turner was discussed. This legislation would authorize tuition revenue bonds to finance construction and infrastructure improvements at Texas' higher education institutions. The chancellors of our state's university systems testified regarding the needs at their universities for buildings to accommodate the growth in student enrollment across Texas.

Urban Affairs

In the Committee on Urban Affairs, we dove into several bills affecting the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. This federal program was created in 1986 during the Reagan Administration and was designed to help developers build more affordable housing by transferring development, maintenance, and operation costs to the private market. With the tax credit, property owners are able to offer reduced rents to cost-burdened families. The 9% tax credit program is highly selective and very competitive. Developers are selected by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Development (TDHCA) based on scoring on the Qualified Allocation Program (QAP). Part of the QAP requires demonstration of community support via a letter from the State Representative. Our State Senators removed themselves from this process during the 83rd legislative session. These letters place Representatives in difficult positions, often needing to make quick decisions and picking winners and losers without having the opportunity to fully vet the project. Additionally, it opens the door to corruption since a letter of support or opposition from a State Representative often determines if a project is awarded the tax credit. My bills, HB 1973 and HB 2943, would remove State Representatives from the application process. There are several differing opinions about how to best address this matter and I look forward to working with the other members of the committee to come up with a solution that best addresses our concerns.

Women's History Month

On Tuesday, I presented a resolution on the House floor recognizing March as Women's History Month, celebrating the enormous contributions women have made to our society. Women have played a vital role in the development of Texas and the United States. From Betsy Ross, who sewed the first American Flag to Miriam Ferguson, the first woman governor of Texas, the contribution of women is woven throughout the timeline of the United States. I am very proud to serve with the ladies of the Texas House.

As many of you already know, I often make calls to constituents that have provided input on issues that we are working on before I vote. I value your comments and the way you take time to share your views so I can better represent you. Please be sure to email

Angie.Button@house.state.gov with any comments you have about legislation or your state government.

Sincerely,

Angie Chen Button

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