



Capitol Update

3/17/2011

[District Home Page](#)



[HD 101 Information](#)

You can track what's going on in Austin and learn how it affects Mesquite, Balch Springs and Sunnyvale



Burkett Legislative

Greetings!

Every session, the Texas Senate and House of Representatives address matters which have been deemed by the Governor to be emergency issues. The emergency designation means that the House and Senate can pass bills on these issues earlier than otherwise allowed by the Texas Constitution, which mandates that the legislature cannot pass major state legislation before the 60th day of the session (this past Monday).

Two weeks ago, the House passed H.B. 15, which I co-authored. H.B. 15 requires a doctor to offer a woman seeking an abortion the ability to view a sonogram at least twenty-four hours before the abortion. H.B. 15 ensures that a woman seeking an abortion is given all of the facts necessary to make an informed decision. Currently, the House and Senate are working out the differences in their respective bills, and I look forward to this bill becoming law.

Soon, the House will consider S.B. 14. The Senate already has passed this measure, which mandates that you must present some form of commonly used identification, such as a driver's license, state issued identification card or passport, in order to cast a ballot. I also am a co-author on this important bill, which will protect the integrity of the ballot box.

By addressing these issues early in the legislative session, when the Constitution prohibits us from taking up other matters, we free up the legislative calendar to deal with the budget, which is typically passed near the end of the session. In previous sessions, issues like Voter ID have

[Info](#)

[--Bills--](#)

[Author](#)

[Co-Author](#)

[--Committees--](#)

[Elections](#)

[Criminal
Jurisprudence](#)

Please Stay in
Touch



Cindy wants to hear from you. Please direct all written correspondence to:

Rep. Cindy Burkett
PO Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

Also, you can reach her by email or over the phone:
(512) 463-0464
or
(972) 603-6743

stalled the legislature and prevented other important measures from passing.

Sincerely,

State Representative Cindy Burkett

Burkett Files Mesquite Municipal Court of Record Legislation

MESQUITE, TEXAS -

State Representative Cindy Burkett filed legislation on Monday, February 28, to establish a municipal court of record in Mesquite, Texas.



In July 2010, the Mesquite City Council approved the establishment of a local court of record. Accordingly, House Bill 1889 would establish the Mesquite Municipal Court as a municipal court of record for the city.

"Currently, it's easy to appeal the decisions of Mesquite's municipal court. If a case is appealed, Mesquite citizens, police and city personnel are inconvenienced with driving to Dallas County for an appearance at the retrial, costing Mesquite time and money," said Burkett. "If the defendant is found guilty in the retrial, Dallas County receives all fine revenue generated from the case."

Under the measure, a Mesquite municipal judge would have the ability to issue rulings that would be subject to the regular appeals process, and fine money would be generated as revenue for the City of Mesquite. Furthermore, "because fewer city cases would be appealed to Dallas County, we would also see an improvement in public accountability," said Burkett.

The measure also would allow a Mesquite judge to issue warrants directly. Currently, local law enforcement must seek its warrants from a neighboring jurisdiction, usually Garland. This extra step in the process wastes valuable time.

Burkett Files Measure to Curb Voter Fraud

Honoring Matthew
Nathaniel Leslie,
Eagle Scout



Congratulations,
Matthew!

MESQUITE, TEXAS - State Representative Cindy Burkett filed legislation on Monday, February 23, restricting persons acting as couriers for mail-in ballots and increasing the penalties for unlawful assistance and unlawful witness to a mail-in ballot.

House Bill 1679 prevents a person that is not a common or contract courier, such as USPS or UPS, from acting as a courier for more than two mail-in ballots per election. New limitations imposed by the bill will not impinge on couriers related to the voters.

"In many localities, individuals receive compensation for 'harvesting' mail-in ballots," said Burkett. "These individuals go door-to-door collecting ballots and posting them on behalf of voters. Such individuals are compensated on a per-ballot basis. Some harvesters use the occasion of collecting the ballots to provide unlawful assistance or unlawful witness to voters, as well as engaging in electioneering in the presence of an active ballot. My hope is that this bill will remove the financial incentive to commit election fraud."

This bill has been referred to the House Committee on Elections.

Stop By Any Time



Cindy met last month with representatives from the Mesquite Police Association...



And with University of Texas at Dallas President, Dr. David Daniel.