

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas House of Representatives



April 5, 2019

Friends,

This week the Texas House passed HB 3. I coauthored this historic legislation that invests \$9 billion in Texas classrooms to boost student achievement, support teacher quality, reduce recapture, and provide property tax relief. Following a full day of productive discussion on the floor, we passed HB 3 with 149 votes.

School finance reform has been a priority for the Texas House and this session it was declared an "emergency item" by Governor Greg Abbott in his biennial State of the State address. This bill is the first major rewrite of school finance laws undertaken without the threat of a court order, and it puts a stop to decades of patchwork fixes by creating a more equitable public education system.

Following the passage of HB 3, I joined Speaker Dennis Bonnen and many of my co-authors at a news conference in the State Capitol. Speaker Bonnen thanked me for coauthoring this monumental legislation and for being at the forefront of championing Texas students and teachers.

Speaker Bonnen stated, "I am so proud of Chairwoman Button for authoring this legislation and for getting the House one step closer to our goal of transforming the public education system for generations to come." Chairman of Public Education and bill author Dan Huberty has been working on this issue for years. He took special attention to welcome input from local school districts throughout the process and I am grateful for his hard work and the work of all my colleagues who worked alongside local school districts that chose to take an active role in crafting this legislation.

Highlights of House Bill 3:

- Invests in Texas students and teachers by adding approximately \$9 billion in funding above enrollment growth and current law entitlement over the next two years.
- Empowers local school districts to put more money in their classrooms by raising the Basic Allotment from \$5,140 to \$6,030, an \$890 increase per student.
- Devotes \$2.7 billion toward property tax reduction.
- Lowers school district property tax rates by an average of 5.5% statewide.
- Reduces recapture by 38% this biennium.
- Guarantees that 25% of the new money will go toward increasing compensation for school district employees.
- Requires voters to authorize tax rates above \$1.01 in an election (three cents lower than current law). Before going to voters for a tax increase, districts must also conduct an efficiency audit to ensure taxpayer dollars are being used responsibly.
- Establishes an early reading program that funds full-day, high quality Pre-K for low-income students, setting the right foundation for students to be able to read at grade level by third grade.
- Allots funding to districts to recruit and retain quality teachers who take on the challenge of teaching at high-needs or rural schools.
- Raises the minimum teacher salary schedule.
- Enhances the yield on the "enrichment" pennies, allowing schools to earn and keep more money for property taxes levied above the standard Tier 1 tax rate.
- Allocates resources to low-income students based on census blocks that are tiered according to economic disadvantage. Quadruples the amount allocated to fast growth districts to build and equip new instructional facilities funding to \$100 million per year.
- Creates a professional development grant program to train teachers in blended learning instruction so they can effectively combine e-learning and traditional classroom instruction.
- Equips districts with the resources needed to identify and intervene at the earliest signs of student dyslexia and related disorders.
- Expands career and technology education programs for students in grades 6-12, better preparing students for the workforce or post-secondary education.

Pastor of the Day Leonard Leach

On April 5th, I had the honor to host Garland Pastor Leonard Leach, for Pastor of the Day at the Capitol. Pastor Leach accepted his call to the ministry in 1979 during his 19-year tenure on staff at Concord Baptist Church in Dallas. In 1996, he was called to serve as Senior Pastor of Mt. Hebron Missionary Baptist Church, the largest predominately African-American church in Garland, TX. Pastor Leach's God-given gifts have provided him opportunities to lecture, preach, and teach all over the United States as well as in Germany. It was such a pleasure having him come down to Austin to give a special invocation on the floor of the Texas House. Pastor Leach serves as an advisor my Urban Affairs Constituent Roundtable. If you would like to hear the Pastor's invocation, you may visit:

http://tlchouse.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=45&clip_id=16960



Pastor Leach and his lovely wife Sharon on the floor of the House with Speaker Bonnen and my dear friend Representative Sherman.

Urban Affairs

The Urban Affairs committee had quite a long hearing this week. We voted out several local bills relating to properly maintaining municipal cemeteries to bolstering cities' tourism marketing to allowing certain cities the ability to sell municipal owned land. This week before the committee, I laid out HB 3778 which I filed to address some of the issues facing our communities in regards to short term rentals (STR).

In Texas, the vacation rental market is a proven economic force. Last year, visitors who stayed in these rentals supported an estimated \$3.5 billion in economic activity and 35,000 full time, permanent jobs. The sharing economy, also known as the peer-to-peer (P2P) economy, is here to stay. Arbitrary bans on short-term rentals limit private property rights and reduce tax revenue. In some cases, these bans drive the operation of short-term rentals underground and make it even more difficult for a municipality to enforce its local ordinances or collect applicable taxes. With all emerging industry, there is a learning curve. Texas lacks guidelines to help navigate the short-term rentals market. The absence of this guidance means some cities have adopted policy

that is constitutionally questionable and has resulted in or will most likely result in costly litigation that taxpayers will have to pay for.

In some cases, cities that do not want to hash this issue out in court have been slow to adopt or enforce policy for their communities. The committee substitute for HB 3778 differs a great deal from the bill as filed and works to achieve balance. This bill does not micromanage. It states that a city may adopt a reasonable policy in the permitting of STRs as long as that policy does not ban their operation in their city.

This bill requires a short-term rental listing service to comply with provisions to help ensure the municipality is able to collect and audit to ensure the appropriate taxes are being paid. This bill strikes the appropriate balance to help provide structure and support to municipalities wishing to regulate short term rentals in their communities.

Students from the District Visit the Capitol

On Monday, students from the University of Texas at Dallas came to visit the state capitol. These bright and wonderful students had displays throughout the capitol showcasing their hard work. As a proud alumnus from UTD, it was truly wonderful to get a chance to meet with these students. Whoosh!



UTD Students, Virginia Blackwell and Shruti Natarajan Met with my staff and me to discuss important findings from their Research.

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.