

# ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



## The State of Texas House of Representatives



*April 12, 2019*

Friends,

The Texas House passed a monumental series of bills to rebuild communities, strengthen infrastructure, mitigate flooding, and ensure the State of Texas is better prepared to respond to future natural disasters. The legislation fulfills a majority of the recommendations made by the Governor's Commission to Rebuild Texas and addresses the critical issues coastal Texans have faced in the months since Hurricane Harvey made landfall.

The Texas House passed more than a dozen bills - including House Bills 5, 6, and 13 - to better equip the state in the event of a natural disaster. Making tangible improvements to flood mitigation and disaster response, recovery, and preparedness are emergency items for the Texas Legislature, as designated by Governor Greg Abbott in his biennial State of the State address. "I applaud Rep. Button for helping to pass these critical pieces of legislation. It reflects the House's unwavering commitment to better prepare our state for future disasters, and will undoubtedly save lives," said Speaker of the House Dennis Bonnen. This legislation applies the

lessons learned from Hurricane Harvey to improve response and recovery statewide, while also providing support to those affected. Texans have undergone enormous challenges in the months since Hurricane Harvey devastated the Gulf Coast. Even in the face of our state's greatest disaster, Texans remained resilient.

### **Legislation for Garland**

This week, I laid out HB 1197 before the Ways & Means Committee. This bill would allow the city of Garland to use hotel occupancy tax revenue for expenses related to sporting events and lower the minimum amount allocated for advertising and promotions.

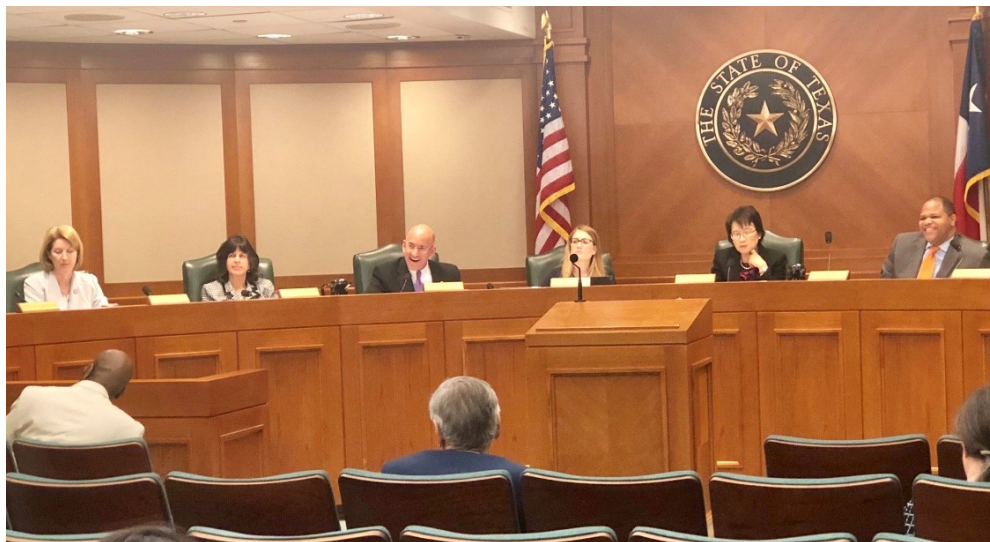
Chapter 351 of the tax code, currently mandates that municipalities with a population over 200,000 allocate 50% of their hotel occupancy tax revenue for advertising and promotions. This one-size fits all restriction for municipalities with populations over 200,000 is not practical for a city like Garland. Although Garland spends a substantial amount of money for targeted advertising and promotions, it does not desire to overspend and waste hotel occupancy tax money on ineffective advertising or promotions. As a result, this particular restriction has created a sizable account containing funds the city can not use. Garland would prefer to put the orphaned funds to work in a responsible manner by using the revenue to host regional and state sporting events.

It was great to have Brian England, the Deputy City Attorney for the City of Garland, here to provide testimony on the bill.

### **Urban Affairs**

This week in Urban Affairs, we heard a couple of bills aimed at helping our first responders and law enforcement that bravely serve our communities. The first was HB 2446, which I proudly coauthored with Representative Valoree Swanson. HB 2446 adds firefighters and paramedics along with police officers and certain public figures whose private information, like their home address, is exempt from a Public Information Request. This will help protect the safety of first responders.

A second bill, HB 3859 by Representative Jarvis Johnson, would require mental health assessments for firefighters and police officers when they witness the loss of a life on the job. Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can pose a serious threat to our first responders and it is important that we protect the mental health of those that serve us. This bill would only apply to the City of Houston but could be an example for other cities across the state.



## **Presiding over the Committee on Urban Affairs**

### **Higher Education**

This week in Higher Education, the Committee voted out several bills to assist high school students preparing for a higher education degree. Dual credit programs allow high school students to take college-level classes for credit. HB 2197 requires these dual credit programs to coordinate advising efforts from the high school level to the college level and HB 3650 requires them to consider the use of free or low-cost open education resources as opposed to traditional curriculum materials. Both bills are designed to equip students with the information and resources they need for a seamless transition to a higher education institution. The Committee also heard testimony on HB 3658 which would require residential advisors and student organization officers to take a drug and alcohol awareness training program to combat overdoses on college campuses.

### **Honorary Pages of the Day**



**Sophia, Lucia, Leonard & Clara helping me bang the gavel on the House Floor**

This week, I was happy to host four young pages that came down from the district to help us out here at the capitol. Sophia, Lucia, Leonardo, and Clara Constantino assisted by helping to preside over the chamber by banging the gavel on the Speaker's dais. They were a big help and were able to learn more about the legislative process by participating in it. This is a great learning experience for any child that is interested in Texas government. If you have a child between the ages of 8-18 who would like to experience the state legislative process firsthand, please contact our office whenever we are in a legislative session to set up a day for them to be an honorary page of the day.

Sincerely,

*Angie Chen Button*

If you would like to be added or removed from this mailing, please e-mail  
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