

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas
House of Representatives



May 30, 2011

Friends,

I hope everyone is enjoying a safe Memorial Day weekend. Memorial Day is a day of opportunity to give thanks for all that we are blessed with and to thank those men and women who, without their courage, valor and singleness of purpose, we would not celebrate the freedom we have.

This Memorial Day also marks the 140th day of the 82nd Regular Session. At 5:30 p.m., the legislature adjourned Sine Die.

Texas Legislative Memorial Ceremony

On Saturday, May 28, at 11:00 AM the Texas House and Senate held a joint-session to host a memorial ceremony honoring the brave Texans who laid down their lives fighting in the War on Terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq. We paid tribute to the lives of 96 service members that day and presented resolutions and flags flown over the Capitol to their families who attended.

I have the deepest respect for our brave soldiers who risked their lives defending our freedom, and our hearts go out to the families that have lost loved ones protecting our great nation. Having grown up in Taiwan, I witnessed firsthand the selflessness of the American naval and air forces stationed there. They prevented a takeover from communist China thereby saving us from the brutality of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.

Special Session

After many conversations amongst members and leadership, we believed the House and the Senate reached middle ground and were prepared to pass a fiscally conservative budget that made the state live within its means. On Saturday, both the House and the Senate passed HB 1, the general budget bill. On Sunday, both chambers took up SB 1811 which pertained to fiscal matters including school finance. Late Sunday, the House adopted SB 1811. Over in the Senate, Fort Worth Senator Wendy Davis filibustered the bill and when the midnight deadline to adopt conference committee reports came, SB 1811 died in the Senate. Without this bill, we cannot certify our budget and must keep working. The Governor is expected to call a special session that will begin tomorrow at 8:00 a.m.

House Legislative Accomplishments

The House of Representatives worked very hard this session on the items Texans sent us to Austin to address. The House immediately got to work on the budget and passed the fiscally responsible House version on April 3, 2011. Additionally, the House passed several important bills to help combat illegal immigration. Below is some of the legislation we passed this session.

Budget

From the beginning of this legislative session the House was committed to the following principles in adopting the budget:

- The budget lives within our means;
- It does not rely on use of the Rainy Day Fund;
- It does not raise taxes;
- It reflects limited government.

Elections and Tort Reform

SB 14 (Signed by the Governor)

After numerous attempts through the years to pass a strong voter integrity bill, this session, the House passed Voter ID legislation requiring photo identification to vote.

HB 174 (Sent to the Governor)

Amends current law relating to the cancellation of the voter registration and to the eligibility to vote of persons who are deceased or are not citizens of the United States.

HB 2817 (Sent to the Governor)

Makes various changes to the Election Code with regard to state and local election process. These changes address frequently asked questions to and from election officials and will result in more efficient elections.

HB 804 (Passed the House but failed in the Senate)

Creates a separate offense for a noncitizen who votes or attempts to vote.

HB 274 (Sent to the Governor)

Consists of comprehensive tort reform that helps ensure our state's judicial system remains fair, predictable, and able to fully compensate those injured by the actions of others.

SB 100 (Sent to Governor)

Updates Texas election law to comply with the Federal MOVE Act to ensure that the votes of our servicemen and women continue to count. It requires the ballots for military voters overseas to be delivered electronically.

Redistricting

We passed a fair and legal House map, SBOE map and Senate map for the first time in twenty years that the House and Senate maps have been passed during regular session.

10th Amendment - State Sovereignty

HCR 50 (Passed the House but failed in the Senate)

Affirms the sovereignty of our great state under the Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

HCR 18 Federal Balanced Budget (Sent to the Governor)

Urges Congress to propose a Constitutional amendment to require them to adopt a balanced budget like we do here in Texas.

Immigration Reform

HB 12 (Passed the House but failed in the Senate)

Addresses concerns that some cities are “sanctuary cities” for illegal immigrants by prohibiting the enforcement of state and federal immigration laws. Prohibits local governmental entities from enacting policies or rules that restrict the enforcement of federal immigration laws. HB 12 leaves to the discretion of the arresting officer to ask about immigration status after a lawful arrest or lawful detention based on a suspected or actual state/local law violation.

HB 197 (Passed in the House but failed in the Senate)

Requires a person applying for any state license to provide proof of citizenship.

HB 875 (Passed the House but failed in Senate)

Requires a sheriff or other officer in charge of a correctional facility to make a reasonable effort to verify the immigration status of a prisoner charged with a felony or intoxication offense before they are released on bail.

HB 892 (Passed the House but Failed in the Senate)

Creates an offense for knowingly transporting (smuggling) an illegal alien.

Eminent Domain Reform

SB 18 (Signed by the Governor)

Makes changes to provisions in state law relating to eminent domain and condemnation in an attempt to reform various aspects of the power of eminent domain and condemnation in Texas.



Discussing legislation on the House floor with Speaker Joe Straus.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent you in the Texas House. Please let me know if I can ever be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Angie Chen Button

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