

# ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



## The State of Texas House of Representatives



*March 24, 2017*

Friends,

Things are heating up outside as well as inside the state capitol. In the House, legislators are hard at work putting together a conservative budget that meets our state's needs.

### **The Budget Process**

The Texas Legislature meets for 140 days every other year. However, Texas' two-year budget takes roughly twice that amount of time to prepare, produce, and administer. The process starts with agencies developing their appropriations requests in the first year, the legislature approves the General Appropriations Act in the second year, and the budget is implemented over the following two years.

The first step is the development of a strategic long-term plan by each state agency. After developing a strategic plan, the agency submits its plan to the Governor's Office of Budget and Policy (GOBP) and the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) for approval.

In the spring or early summer preceding the legislative session, the LBB sends out Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) instructions. These instructions are used by agencies to develop their budget requests. During the following months, the LBB and GOBP hold hearings with each agency concerning the agency's strategic plan and LAR.

These LARs form the basis for the appropriations bill prepared by the LBB. During the fall prior to the legislative session, LBB staff prepares the general appropriations bill draft. This proposed appropriations bill contains performance measures, the maximum number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions allowed per agency, capital budget information, specific instructions and contingencies on certain expenditures (called riders), the amount of funding recommended by the LBB, and the method of financing for each agency's appropriation.

Next, the appropriations bill is filed in both chambers of the legislature, allowing each chamber to work on the bill at the same time but independently. Traditionally, the final bill sent to the governor alternates between a Senate bill one session and a House bill the next. This session it will be a Senate bill. The comptroller provides a biennial revenue estimate (BRE) at the beginning of each regular session which is used by the legislature to ensure that appropriations will not exceed the anticipated revenue. During the first part of the session, the Senate Committee on Finance and the House Committee on Appropriations receive testimony on the budget from state agencies and institutions of higher education. Each committee makes changes to the budget document. After the bill passes out of the respective committees in each chamber, it goes to the House and Senate floor for a vote. The bill is then referred to a conference committee, composed of members of both chambers, to resolve differences between the Senate and House versions of the bill.

After the conference committee has reconciled the differences and has agreed to an appropriations bill, the bill is sent back to both chambers for a vote on final passage. If both chambers pass the appropriations bill, it is sent to the comptroller for certification. The Texas Constitution requires the comptroller to certify whether there will be sufficient revenue to cover the appropriations made by the legislature.

After the appropriations bill is certified by the comptroller, it is sent to the governor for his or her signature.

### **Higher Education**

This week in the Higher Education Committee, we heard bills addressing sexual assault on college campuses. Currently, universities provide informational briefings for incoming freshmen on the dangers of sexual assault. HB 16 by Chairman J. M. Lozano would add dating violence and stalking to those briefings as well as an online reporting system to make sure students feel safe when reporting these crimes. HB 1096 by Terry Canales would also create a comprehensive prevention and outreach program, but would withdraw state funding should a university fail to comply. Lastly, HB 355 by John Raney would not allow registered sex offenders to reside on campus of a public or private university.

We heard emotional testimony regarding these bills. The bills were left pending in committee allowing authors to work with opposition and improve the legislation prior to being voted out.



**Working on legislation impacting North Texas with Representative Cindy Burkett on the House Floor**

It is an honor to serve as your State Representative. Please continue to communicate your views on issues that are important to you.

Sincerely,

*Angie Chen Button*

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