

# ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



## The State of Texas House of Representatives



*April 7, 2017*

Friends,

Last night, around 1:30 AM and after over 15 hours of debate, the Texas House voted for a fiscally responsible, transparent budget and supplemental budget for the next two years.

The House has exercised leadership in crafting a conservative and responsible budget that spends \$106.8 billion in available revenue. Given revenue challenges and despite significant population and inflation growth, the House biennium budget is still \$1 billion less than the current budget.

Although very real budget cuts were necessary, the House budget still makes significant investments in critical priorities. Our proposal includes nearly \$1.5 billion in new money for public education, while also reducing recapture (better known as Robin Hood). We are addressing the foster care crisis in Texas by investing \$433 million of additional funds to Child Protective Services. In addition, the House is dedicating \$62.6 million in new funds to eliminate waiting lists

for community mental health services across the state while maintaining our commitment to border security funding.

In 1987 the state created the Economic Stabilization Fund (ESF). This fund is often referred to as the "Rainy Day Fund." Former Rep. Paul Colbert, who authored the legislation creating the fund, has explained it was done to "flatten out the available revenue stream from the up and down swings of the economy so that constant levels of service could be provided." Considering the original intent of the legislation and with a balance in the Fund approaching \$12 billion, I support using \$2.5 billion of the ESF because the stakes are too high for abused children and educators, both past and present.

The House budget uses a portion of the Economic Stabilization Fund to bridge funding gaps for some of the state's critical needs:

- Increased support for kinship caregivers (HB4)
- TRSCare shortfall
- Student financial aid
- Border security
- Critical infrastructure and deferred maintenance at state hospitals and state-supported living centers
- Essential cybersecurity upgrades at state agencies
- Forensic bed capacity at state hospitals

The House budget is fully transparent and protects the state's investment in transportation while maintaining our long-standing commitment to using dedicated funds for their rightful purpose.

I am confident that the House budget addresses critical issues that affect Texans on a daily basis. The House budget is balanced, cuts spending, prioritizes critical funding items, and honors our dedicated funding streams without diversions.

### **Helping Small Business in Texas**

On Wednesday, I hosted a roundtable discussion at the State Capitol with Texas Department of Banking Commissioner Charles Cooper, House Committee on Investments and Financial Services Chairman Tan Parker, and Representatives Will Metcalf and Ernest Bailes of the Subcommittee on Small Business Development along with several bankers, Garland Chamber CEO Paul Mayer, and small business representatives. We addressed the challenges small business owners face in securing funding to grow their business. The overbearing federal regulations on both banking and business was another topic brought up by several participants. It is important that Texas remain a low-tax state with a stable regulatory environment for both business and Texas to flourish.



**Discussing how banks can meet the needs of small business with banking Commissioner Cooper, bankers, and small business representatives.**



**On Tuesday, I met with members of the Catholic Diocese of Dallas including Dr. Matt Vereecke, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Bill Keffler, COO of the Diocese of Dallas and former Richardson City Manager, Michael Pazzaglini, President of St. Vincent de Paul Society, and Jari Mema of Catholic Charities.**

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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