



Capitol Update

4/21/2011

[District Home Page](#)



[HD 101 Information](#)

You can track what's going on in Austin and learn how it affects Mesquite, Balch Springs and Sunnyvale



Burkett Legislative

Greetings!

I wanted to update you on the status of the state budget. Many of you have written letters and emails or called the office over the past month to express your concerns regarding the draft of the budget the House passed on April 3rd.

Much has happened since the House adopted a version of the budget at the beginning of the month. While the Senate still has not passed its version of the budget, and while we still await a revised revenue estimate from the Comptroller (expected in May), our revenue situation is becoming more clear.

First of all, we received good news a few weeks ago when Congress finally struck down the so called "Doggett Amendment," the repeal of which freed up around \$830 million in federal funds for Texas schools. Additionally, State Representative Rob Orr has uncovered a potential revenue source in the funds already generated by the School Land Board. H.B. 2646 and H.J.R. 109 would direct the School Land Board to direct half of its annual revenues to the Available School Fund. This change would result in several hundred million dollars being directed to the Available School Fund annually without raising taxes. I support passage of H.J.R. 109 so that voters will have a chance to consider this important measure in the fall.

While we are still far from where any of us would like to be on the budget, we are making progress. Our state is in a sobering economic situation. We must consider every responsible option for how to address our current needs while not hampering our slow-but-steady economic

[Info](#)

[--Bills--](#)

[Author](#)

[Co-Author](#)

[--Committees--](#)

[Elections](#)

[Criminal
Jurisprudence](#)

Please Stay in
Touch



Cindy wants to hear from you. Please direct all written correspondence to:

Rep. Cindy Burkett
PO Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

Also, you can reach her by email or over the phone:
(512) 463-0464
or
(972) 603-6743

recovery. To that end, many of you have asked why we simply do not spend all of the "Rainy Day Fund" now to help lessen the impact of the current budget shortfall.

I supported spending \$3.2 billion of the fund to make up for the current biennium's shortfall, but I don't think it's a good idea to spend the balance of the fund at this current time. Like any savings account, once it's gone--it's gone. The state would be left without sufficient resources in the case of natural disaster (hurricane season is but a few months away). Also, Texas is currently facing up to a \$24 billion dollar unbudgeted increase in healthcare costs for the 2013 biennium because of the unfunded mandates contained in the federal healthcare act. We must not be too quick to spend all of our reserves when we face known future challenges.

I have promised you from the beginning that I am committed to solving our current shortfall in an equitable manner. I look forward to your input as we continue through the process.

Sincerely,

State Representative Cindy Burkett

Burkett Passes First Two Bills Out of the House

MESQUITE, TEXAS -

On Thursday, April 7th, State Representative Cindy Burkett passed her first two bills out of the House of Representatives.



House Bill 1344 is a measure that would remove the blanket defense to prosecution for parents who show pornography to their own minor children. Under current law, it is difficult to prosecute a parent who shows pornography to his or her own minor children, even if the other parent objects and the material has no redeeming value. H.B. 1344 closes the current loophole while maintaining an affirmative defense to prosecution in the instances where the display to the child served an educational, governmental, or scientific purpose.

House Bill 1889 would give the city of Mesquite the authority to establish a Municipal Court of Record. In July 2010, the Mesquite City Council approved the establishment of a local court of record.

**Tree Dedication at
Eastfield College**



Currently, it's easy to appeal the decisions of Mesquite's municipal court. If a case is appealed, Mesquite citizens, police and city personnel are inconvenienced with driving to Dallas County for an appearance at the retrial, costing Mesquite time and money. If the defendant is found guilty in the retrial, Dallas County receives all fine revenue generated from the case.

Under the measure, a Mesquite municipal judge would have the ability to issue rulings that would be subject to the regular appeals process, and fine money would be generated as revenue for the City of Mesquite. The measure also would allow a Mesquite judge to issue warrants directly. Currently, local law enforcement must seek its warrants from a neighboring jurisdiction, usually Garland.

**Mesquite "Honoring
the Fallen" Event**



Stop By Any Time



Cindy met last month with residents of Sunnyvale, who were at the Capitol for Sunnyvale Day...



And with students from Eastfield College, who were participating in a week long internship program at the Capitol. Nick Hernandez worked as an intern in our office and did a fantastic job.