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Only two weeks into the 85th Legislative Session but the work is already well underway!

On Tuesday, the Transition Legislative Oversight Committee (the joint committee created to oversee the Sunset recommendations for consolidation at the Health and Human Services Commission) continued our work from the interim by hearing testimony from HHSC Executive Commissioner Charles



Smith and Department of Family and Protective Services Commissioner Whitman. While there is still significant work to be done to accomplish the goals laid out by the Legislature last session, I am optimistic the leadership at the agency understands our vision and will implement the changes necessary to improve the agency for all Texans.

I was also honored this week to be re-elected as Vice Chair of the Texas House Caucus by my colleagues for the third Legislative Session in a row. We have made great strides for our state over the past few years and I look forward to continuing that work with my colleagues in the 85th Session.

Like always, I welcome your opinion and feedback on any and all issues before the Legislature. Please contact me at [cindy.burkett@house.texas.gov](mailto:cindy.burkett@house.texas.gov) or call our office at 512-463-0464.

Sincerely,

Cindy Burkett  
State Representative

### Legislative Highlights

This week I filed [House Bill 1055](#), which will prohibit state agencies from increasing occupational licensing fees and return this authority to your elected representatives.

This piece of common sense legislation accomplishes three basic goals:

- Removes rate setting authority from unelected bureaucrats and returns it to your elected representatives.
- Adds transparency and accountability to professional licensing fees by providing a voice to citizens across Texas.
- An agency would now have to justify and defend any proposed increase in licensing fees to the Legislature.

For a full list of bills I have filed in the 85th Session, [click here](#).

**HD 113 in Austin**

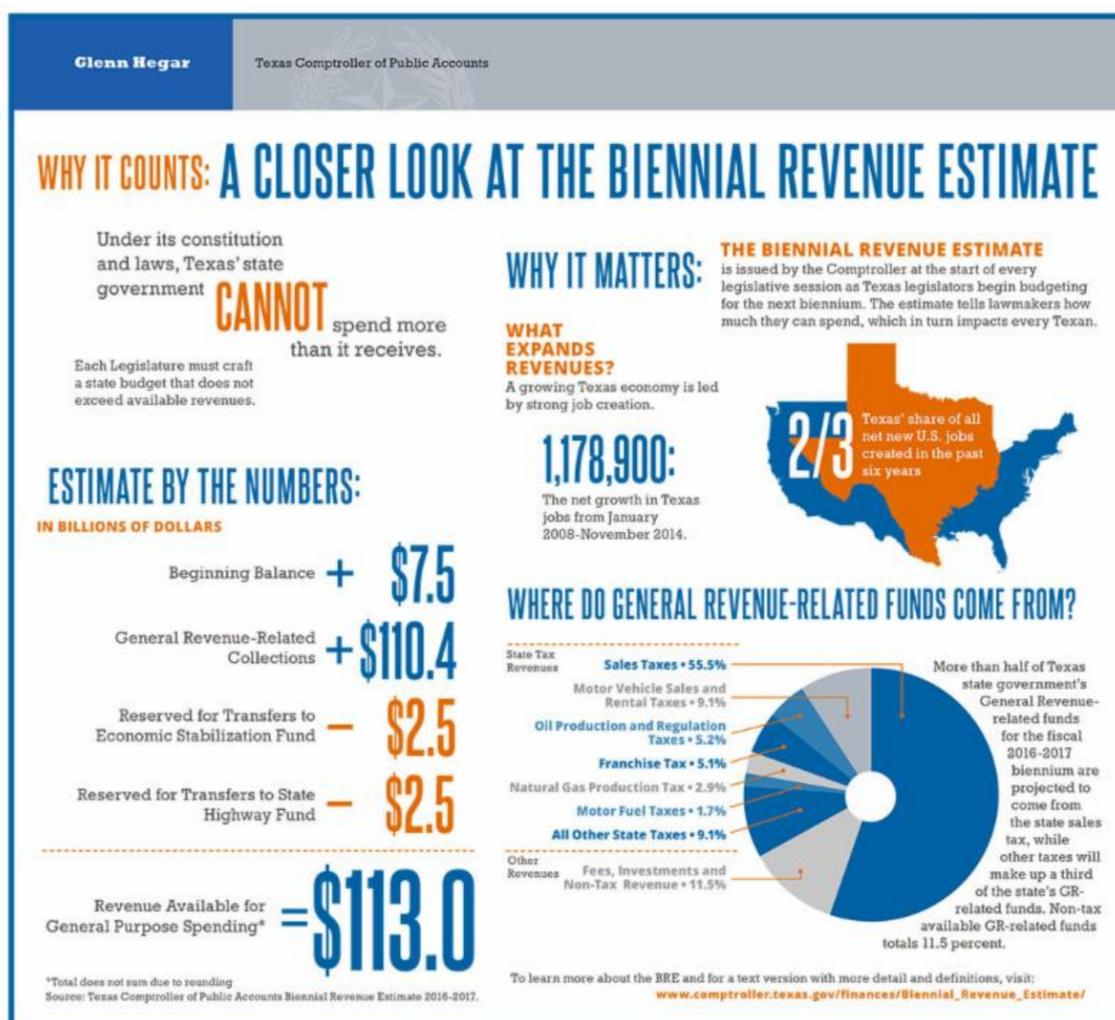
Last week I had the pleasure of meeting with several constituents from House District 113, including leaders from the City of Rowlett and firefighters from Garland.

Though there is a lot of work to accomplish this session, my top priority will always be to listen to and represent constituents of District 113.



## State of the Budget

The budget is the one bill that the legislature has to pass each session, so naturally we get started as early as possible. On Tuesday, both the House and Senate filed their starting budget.



A snapshot of the Biennial Revenue Estimate by Comptroller Hegar. Click the image to enlarge.

The preliminary House budget that was filed earlier this week is just that - a starting point. This proposed budget is a good point to begin as it prioritizes public education, mental health, and child protective services while keeping overall spending low, reducing administrative costs, and cutting discretionary programs across state agencies.

It's important to remember that whatever the differences between the House and Senate budget proposals, this is still a very long process that provides all members an opportunity to shape a conservative budget for our next biennium. Last session, the House spent nearly 24 hours debating more than 400 amendments to the budget. This is the same level of discretion and debate over the state's priorities that I anticipate we will have this session as well. We owe it to all Texas taxpayers to ensure that every dollar we collect is well-spent and justified.