



TEXAS STATE SENATOR  
**Angela**  
**PAXTON**  
SENATE PAGE

Listen ★ Learn ★ Lead

March 19, 2021



---

The women of the Texas Senate stand together in recognition of Women's History Month. As only the 21st woman to have ever served in the Texas Senate, I am so grateful for the opportunity to listen, learn, and lead as your Texas State Senator in District 8.



## PROTECTING ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS

**ERCOT Pricing Adjustment Legislation (SB 2142)** - On Monday this week, my Senate colleagues and I took swift action to address overcharges made by ERCOT during Winter Storm Uri. Addressing this issue was a clear priority for us in the Senate, and in just one day, we passed Senate Bill 2142, which requires the Texas Public Utility Commission (PUC) to correct pricing and billing errors to save electric customers billions of dollars.

The recent, unprecedented winter storm placed unexpected challenges on the Texas electric grid. During the storm, the PUC set the wholesale electric rate at the capped rate of \$9,000 per megawatt hour. ERCOT continued to charge the maximum rate for an additional 32 hours after load shed. I voted in favor of and fully support SB 2142 to protect retail electric customers from the inaccurate billing errors and rate increases during this period of time.

The Texas House of Representatives has declined to act on this bill.

**Securization for Electric Co-Ops (SB 1950)** - Last Friday, I filed SB 1950 to allow electric cooperatives (co-ops), such as CoServ, to utilize the full faith and credit of the State of Texas to secure financing using the state's bond rating for long-term, low interest loans. Electric co-ops are customer-based utility providers with member-elected boards of directors that operate closer to the people and do not currently have the ability to finance large costs without passing those costs directly to the customers.

Co-ops were hit particularly hard by Winter Storm Uri, and some have already declared bankruptcy. The options for the cooperatives to pay for the financial obligations are to pass the wholesale costs to the customers, declare bankruptcy, or borrow money to pay for the wholesale prices. Allowing co-ops to borrow the money will help alleviate a massive and immediate hit to co-op members (their customers).

## ELECTION INTEGRITY

**Election Integrity Bill (SB 7)** - Protecting election integrity is a top priority for me and an emergency item designated by Governor Greg Abbott. Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick designated SB 7 as priority legislation to address this issue.

I joint-authored SB 7, which proposes changes to enhance election integrity in four major areas:

- Voter registration changes - Among other provisions, the local registrar must notify the Office of the Attorney General, the Secretary of State, and the local District Attorney when someone who is ineligible to vote votes or registers to vote, and follow up on any determination of ineligibility. The early voting clerk must also report voter fraud to the Office of the Attorney General.
- Mail-in ballot changes - Among other provisions, an applicant for a single election mail-in ballot must affirmatively indicate they meet the definition of disabled. Additionally, this bill mandates that the Secretary of State must create a program that allows applicants / voters to track their ballot applications and mail ballots online. Other provisions limit the wide distribution of ballots, provide for the care of mail-in ballots to preserve information in the event of irregularity, and put processes in place for the signature verification committee.
- Election related changes - Among other provisions, this legislation provides the same voting protections for curbside voting as voting inside the polling places. Other provisions include mandatory tests of voting machines, prohibiting drive through voting and temporary structures as polling places, and expanding protections for poll watchers and observers.
- Enforcement related changes - Among other provisions this legislation prohibits people who have been convicted of obstructing poll watchers from serving as election officers in the future. It also provides for civil penalties and fines for public election workers who violate the law.

## EDUCATION REFORM

**Expanding Virtual Learning Options (SB 27)** - Included in Lt. Governor's education-related priority legislation is SB 27, which expands virtual learning

options for students by increasing access to the State Virtual School Network for more students.

**Charter School Equity Act (SB 28)** - I co-authored this legislative priority bill to prohibit local governments from interfering with the operations of charter schools, including where a charter may be located and other policies relating to land use ordinances, regulations, and fees. Additionally, SB 28 removes final veto power from the State Board of Education for charter school applicants that meet the Texas Education Agency's rigorous vetting standards and requirements.

Educational research tells us that student achievement is most impacted by two factors: Great teachers and engaged parents. Offering options to parents is a natural, powerful, and effective opportunity to engage parents.