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In order to be responsive to the latest legislative developments, MOCPA continually monitors proposed legislation. The society utilizes both professional and grassroots lobbyists to ensure the CPA profession has a voice in Jefferson City. By keeping members informed, MOCPA is empowering you to contribute to the legislative process.

Update provided by Chuck Pierce, CPA, MOCPA government relations consultant

Session Update

The House was business as usual last week. The Senate, on the other hand, spent two days locked in a filibuster, which resulted in several hearings being cancelled and impacted the tax reform legislation.

The Senate took up legislation that established new procedures for public utility rate making. The issue is whether utilities can build in acceptable levels of investment in infrastructure into their rates in advance of finishing the projects. This seems like a simple issue, but as with most legislation, the details are much more complex than the issue itself. The debate centers around how to strike the balance between allowing reasonable investment and controlling rate growth. This debate has been going on in the Legislature for several years. Utility companies have been trying to get the changes, while large utility users have been trying to keep the status quo.

Legislation filed this year seemed to strike the balance by allowing the investments but capping rate growth. While this seemed a reasonable compromise to most, it was not acceptable to all. It only takes a few Senators to effectively block legislation by tying up debate. That was the case when the bill came up for debate in the Senate Wednesday evening. Senators Libla, Schaaf and Romine immediately took to the floor, and with the intermittent help of a few others, they tied the floor up for more than 24 hours. A compromise was eventually reached, and the bill passed Thursday evening.

Senate committees are not allowed to meet while the Senate is in session. This rule slowed down the advancement of tax legislation. The Senate Ways and Means Committee had scheduled an executive session for Thursday morning to try to work out a compromise on a Senate tax reform bill. The meeting was cancelled because the Senate had not adjourned. At this point, the next scheduled hearing of the committee is Tuesday morning, where it is anticipated they will vote on a compromise tax reform bill. The details of the plan are still uncertain, but the compromise bill is expected to contain some parts of Senate Bills 611, 617, 667 and 939. SB 939 has already been modified to include all the governor's tax reform ideas. The governor's staff is working to see that those measures are included in any committee substitute approved. It remains to be seen if that will be the case.

The House made it through the week with no significant drama. They advanced several bills to the Senate and spent much of the week hearing bills in committee. The primary focus thus far has been to work on non-controversial bills that the House passed last year but died in the Senate. The idea is to get those issues to the Senate early, so they have as much time as possible to work through the somewhat slower process of the Senate.

Legislation of Interest

To view the complete list of high-priority bills MOCPA is currently tracking, along with their most recent activity and current status, [click here](#). The following bills had significant activity this week:

[HB 1370](#), requiring public schools to post certain financial information online for public access, passed the House 145 to 1.

[SB 573](#), allowing an income tax deduction for certain military personnel, was perfected by the Senate. It needs one more vote then goes to the House.

[SB 593](#), enacting provisions relating to financial solvency of insurance companies, was perfected by the Senate. It needs one more vote then goes to the House.

For Additional Information

This *Government Advocacy Update* will continue weekly through the legislative session. If you have any questions on MOCPA's government advocacy efforts, please visit the [Web page](#), or contact [Dena Hull](#) at (800) 264-7966, ext. 105.

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