



Government Advocacy Update

PROTECTING YOUR INTERESTS

January 23, 2017

In order to be responsive to the latest legislative developments, the MSCPA 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, the MSCPA is empowering you to contribute to the legislative process.

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

Session Update

Last week was a busy one in the Capitol. Gov. Greitens presented his priorities to a joint session of the Legislature in the State of the State speech; the House took action on high-priority legislation; the Senate advanced key bills in committee to position itself for key floor debate; and dozens of CPAs descended on the Capitol.

The governor's actions made a strong impact on the Legislature. He started the week by announcing his budget withholds. All had expected additional withholds to be necessary, so the announcement was not a surprise, nor were any of the targets. Because the governor did not release his budget as part of his State of the State speech, it is still a mystery as to whether this is all that will be needed, and how many cuts to next year's budget will be necessary.

While the governor departed from tradition by not including the budget in his speech, he focused on his legislative priorities for the year, which included:

- A ban on lobbyists gifts;
- Term limits for all statewide officeholders;
- Passage of right to work legislation;
- Tort reform, including passage of an expert witness bill;
- A temporary freeze on state regulations with a complete review of all existing regulations;
- A need to make Missouri a more efficient bureaucracy, noting that Missouri has 92 state employees for every 10,000 citizens, which is significantly higher than many comparable states;
- A complete review of Missouri's tax system, including tax credits;
- Changes to Missouri's welfare system to eliminate disincentives for working;
- Praising the efforts of law enforcement, while he called for improvements to create safer cities;
- Partnering with social- and faith-based agencies to help reduce recidivism in the corrections system; and
- A pledge to protect teachers' pensions.

The speech did not provide details on how these priorities would be implemented. Most expect the will be presented as future legislation or when the budget is released.

The House delivered on Speaker Richardson's promise to start the session with high-priority legislation. Last week, they passed legislation banning lobbyist gifts, and establishing Missouri as a right to work state. Both of these bills now go to the Senate.

The Senate spent the week working on high-priority bills in committee, including tort reform and right to work. Legislation was advanced out of committee and is expected to receive floor debate soon.

Last week was also marked by dozens of CPAs visiting the Capitol for CPA Day. Attendees heard from legislative leaders, were introduced in both chambers, and delivered tax guides to every legislator. Many attendees had an opportunity to visit one on one with their representative and senator and discuss issues of importance to the profession. Thank you to everyone who gave up a day of work to make the trek to Jefferson City. The show of support by so many CPAs is critical to the effectiveness of the MSCPA's governmental relations efforts.

Committee Hearings of Interest

The House Litigation Reform Committee conducted a hearing on [HB 153](#), which modifies provisions relating to expert witnesses. The MSCPA supports this legislation.

The Senate Ways and Means Committee took action on two bills of interest to the MSCPA. They held a hearing on [SB 130](#), which would require the Department of Revenue to pay the taxpayer's attorney fees in certain cases. The MSCPA supports this legislation. The committee voted do-pass [SB 16](#), which clarifies that transportation charges are not subject to sales tax.

Legislation of Interest

[Click here](#) for a list of high-priority bills the MSCPA is currently tracking that are of interest to Missouri CPAs and businesses. This list will continue to change quite a bit as new legislation is introduced.

For Additional Information

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

Related Links

- Become a [Legislative Keyperson](#)
- Contribute to [MO CPA-PAC](#)

Click [here](#) to unsubscribe