



## Government Advocacy Update

PROTECTING YOUR INTERESTS

January 9, 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

The 2017 General Assembly officially kicked off at noon on Jan. 4. Because this is the first term of the new legislative session, it starts with the swearing in of all members newly elected, followed by speeches from legislative leaders. Although the first day is generally focused on legislators' families and constituents, the opening tone and comments can provide a glimpse of what is to come.

The best description for the tone of the opening comments is one of optimism for accomplishing a legislative agenda. While Republicans have held the majority in both chambers for a number of years, this is the first time in eight years that they face the prospect of a session with a governor from the same party. The outlook for several issues that have been heavily supported by the General Assembly in the past, but opposed by the outgoing governor, are very promising. In broad terms, these issues are: right to work, unemployment reform, tort reform, and economic development.

The Legislature wasted no time getting to work on this agenda. At the start of a new session, committees must be formed and staffed. This was done in both chambers by the end of the second day. Some committees have already scheduled hearings on bills, and you can expect other high-priority legislation to receive hearings soon.

Another component of the legislative focus is yet to develop, as Governor-Elect Greitens was officially sworn in at noon today. While he has already been meeting regularly with legislators, his official legislative priorities and focus won't be fully communicated to the Legislature until his State of the State speech on Jan. 17. No one expects anything in his remarks that will change the areas of emphasis, but most do anticipate more specifics that may yet shape legislation.

The budget, a perennial driver of the legislative focus, also has yet to be presented. Preliminary indications are that flat to declining revenue forecasts combined with significant increases in obligations for the state's entitlement programs are painting a bleak fiscal picture for the incoming governor. He is expected to begin his term by withholding funds from the existing budget and figuring out a way to trim next year's. As these details emerge, look for them to shape much of the debate within the Legislature.

Also yet to be determined is the view of the other state-wide office holders. Taking office today, along with the new governor, are a new state treasurer; attorney general; secretary of state; and lieutenant governor. Because these new officials are also Republicans, you can expect their legislative priorities are likely to receive favorable treatment by the General Assembly.

The bottom line after this first week is: buckle up, and hang on! It looks to be a fast and furious ride. Please stay informed, and get involved. This truly is an important year to consider attending [CPA Day](#)—Jan. 18 at the State Capitol. This complimentary event allows you to hear the latest updates impacting the profession and receive briefings from legislative leaders. Also, MSCPA members will be handing out *Legislator's Tax Guides* to all 197 lawmakers, so there is a need for many CPAs to come and make a strong impact.

#### Legislation of Interest

[Click here](#) to view an early list of high-priority bills the MSCPA is currently tracking, based on pre-filing and the first few days of session. This list will change quite a bit over the next few weeks 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

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