

Government Advocacy Update



Protecting Your Interests

February 22, 2021

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

Last week's weather significantly impacted the Legislature's activity. The Senate shut down for the week, and the House had an abbreviated schedule. Because of the short schedule, there is not much floor activity to report. However, the House held committee hearings on several bills of interest to MOCPA.

The Senate announced Sunday that they would not be in session Monday, and by Monday they cancelled session for the week. The House held technical sessions on Monday and Tuesday. In technical sessions, they read in bills but do not actually conduct any business, and members are not required to be present. The House officially convened at 10 a.m. on Wednesday and adjourned by noon on Thursday. The weather was bad enough that the state made the unusual move of closing all its offices on Tuesday.

One issue MOCPA has been monitoring closely is the return of erroneous unemployment insurance benefit payments. Last year, the CARES Act provided expanded federal unemployment benefits to workers who were unemployed due to the pandemic. The additional payments were initiated quickly and like a lot of other parts of the CARES Act assistance, the money came out ahead of the guidance. As the Department of Labor reviewed payments, they identified errors. The normal process for these types of errors is to ask for the recipients to return the erroneous payments. Because the additional benefit was substantially higher than the normal benefit, this can be a big financial hit to the recipients. As the notices went out, the calls to legislators started.

The House Special Committee on Government Oversight held hearings on several bills designed to forgive the overpayments. Because the state portion is paid out of the trust fund, forgiving those amounts could result in increases in businesses unemployment premiums. However, the federal government has told the states that they can forgive the federal portion with no consequences. Last week, the committee voted out [HB 1083](#), which does that. The bill needs one more committee vote then it goes to the floor for debate.

The House Ways and Means Committee acted on several bills of interest to MOCPA. The committee voted out [HB 554](#) and [HB 644](#). These are two bills establishing economic nexus (*Wayfair* bill). The bills are very similar on technical issues but differ greatly on the policy of what to do with the new

revenue and local votes. Because the committee voted out both bills, it looks like these issues will be the subject of floor debate.

The committee held a hearing on [HB 388](#). As currently drafted, this bill would give the Department of Revenue complete discretion to discontinue sending any notices by certified mail. MOCPA testified in opposition to this bill and is working with the sponsor and the DOR to clarify the legislation.

Legislation of Interest

[Click here](#) to view the complete list of high-priority bills MOCPA is currently tracking. The period for filing bills is still open, so new bills are added every day. Be sure to check the list regularly to look for legislation that may be of interest to you or your clients.

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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