

Government Advocacy Update



Protecting Your Interests

May 8, 2017

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 Legislature met its Constitutional deadline to pass the budget, which was the Senate's main focus last week. An amendment connected to the budget created a real threat of sweeping the licensing revenue of the Missouri State Board of Accountancy fund. With only one week left in regular session, it is unclear if anything can unsnarl the tangled backlog of legislation. Despite the overall slow pace, Missouri CPAs had their legislation advanced in the House.

The Senate continued to work at a snail's pace last week. Monday got off to a rocky start. Shortly after convening, the Senate became embroiled in a procedural debate designed by a group of senators to slow debate. After spending an hour unwinding the snarl, the Senate adjourned. Tuesday and Wednesday had similar results. The cause was a group of Senators who wanted to force debate on legislation to ban political spending by 501-C4 organizations that do not have to disclose the source of their funding. This spending, called dark money, has been used this session to target several senators.

On Thursday, the budget was presented and approved in the House. The House then adjourned for the week, forcing the Senate to "take it or leave it" with the budget to meet the Friday deadline. The Senate worked through the budget during the day, moving through the first 10 bills without issue.

The controversy occurred around 7:30 p.m. as the Senate took up House Bill 11. This budget bill included cuts to home health services unless the Senate passed HCB 3, which eliminated the circuit breaker for renters. This measure had previously stalled out in the Senate. The Senate went to HCB 3, but immediately changed the game. An amendment was offered that changed the funding source from eliminating the circuit breaker tax credit, to instead sweeping funds from several special revenue funds. This would have resulted in money from the State Board of Accountancy fund being diverted to General Revenue. Quick thinking on the part of MOCPA member Senator Denny Hoskins, CPA, protected all licensing board funds for all professions. Senator Hoskins offered an amendment to the bill to protect all licensing funds. The amendment passed with strong support.

After the amendment HCB 3 passed, the Senate finished the budget in short order. HCB 3 now goes to the House for approval of the Senate changes, while the budget goes to the governor. He has until June 30 to sign, veto, or withhold budget items before the budget goes into effect July 1.

The Senate convened on Friday to debate the legislation directed at dark money expenditures. They spent the entire day in debate on various amendments to this legislation but adjourned without having gotten to a vote. It is unclear whether the Senate will return to this legislation today. If they do, the debate is expected to be long. If they don't, it is expected that a group of Senators supporting the legislation will slow down the Senate for the last week.

Heading into the last week, there is a great deal of uncertainty. It seems apparent the Senate is unlikely to pick up the pace on legislation. The House, on the other hand, can do a lot to break the backlog. The question is whether they are willing. Absent a functioning Senate, the only viable option to the House is to pass "without-amendment" bills that have passed the Senate. This means House members must accept any changes the Senate made without change. Accepting someone else's changes to your legislation is not always palatable to legislators.

Legislation of Interest

Key legislation of interest to MOCPA at this point is still able to pass under the above scenario, but it is a long shot. The changes to the Missouri Accountancy statutes are contained in **SB 395** and **SB 125**. While the legislation has no opposition, it must navigate the tortuous path of the current logjam. MOCPA is hoping for a breakthrough in the final days.

Thanks to all of you who contacted your representative. The vote is day to day, with no way to predict when the legislation will come up. Given the frantic pace of the last week and the huge volume of communication that legislators deal with, the window for effective communication is probably closed. Therefore, unless we notify you otherwise, there is no need to further contact your representative.

For Additional Information

Legislation is normally heavily amended during the last week of session, so it will take time to wade through and determine what passed. Expect the *Government Advocacy Update* wrap-up edition to be emailed next Friday, May 19.

In the meantime, if you have any questions on MOCPA's government advocacy efforts, please visit the [website](#) or contact [Dena Hull](#) at (800) 264-7966, ext. 105.

Related Information

- Attend MOCPA's Legislation and Government Advocacy [Committee meeting](#) on May 19
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