



April 17, 2020

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

Senate and House leadership announced this week that the Legislature plans to convene April 27. The announcement did not include much detail on what items they plan to work on or how the process will be managed. The Legislature’s session length is governed by the Missouri Constitution. After returning on April 27, the legislators face two constitutional deadlines that will impact what items they are likely to work on and when they must be completed.

The first clear priority is passage of the state’s 2021 budget. The deadline for passage this year is May 8. Although the Legislature has been working on the budget since the start of the session in January, the state’s fiscal picture for next year has changed dramatically in the past four weeks. As a result, the budget process will have to start over. Budget writers will be contending with a myriad of economic impacts of dealing with COVID-19. These include trying to estimate: the impact on tax revenues of the economic downturn; the fiscal impact of delaying tax payment deadlines; and the prospect of increased need for state services. Additionally, the details of all the federal assistance programs are not fully developed at this point, so the budget will need to contain a lot of flexibility.

Dealing with all of this in two weeks would be difficult in the best of conditions. This will be even harder under the modifications to legislative processes necessary to follow appropriate social distancing measures. Committee meetings need to be in larger rooms, and all floor votes will need to be done on a scheduled basis. It is hard to imagine this not taking up most, if not all, of the time period from April 27 to May 8.

What is not clear at this point is whether the Legislature will try to work on other matters. The Constitutional deadline for adjournment of the session this year is May 15 at 6 p.m. Although it would be possible to work on some items concurrent with the work on budget, those opportunities will be limited. If the budget is completed by May 8, the Legislature could decide to come in for the final week and focus on other legislation. In a normal year, the bulk of the legislation is passed in the last three weeks, with most of it being done in the last week. It is likely, however, that because of the extend recesses this year that a lot of key legislation is not positioned for a vote the final week. If the decision is made to try to take up some other legislative priorities, look for a free-for-all of amendments in order to get priority legislation positioned for passage.

MOCPA will monitor this situation closely and update the legislation on its website with changes.

For Additional Information

This *Government Advocacy Update* will continue to be included in MOCPA's weekly Friday updates to the membership. 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.