

April 24, 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

The Legislature is poised to return to Jefferson City on Monday, April 27. It appears at this point they are planning to work the remaining three weeks left until the constitutionally required adjournment of May 15. It is not clear what issues they will tackle or how they will conduct business.

The first priority will be the passage of fiscal year 2021 budget, which will not be an easy task. During the weeks the Legislature has not been in session, the state's budget picture has steadily deteriorated.

Revenues have been decimated by the declining economy and the extension of income tax payment and filing deadlines. Because those deadlines were extended into next fiscal year, there is no way for the budget writers to reasonably estimate how much they may be. That, combined with not having a reasonable estimate of when a recovery may start, makes it very difficult for the appropriators to know what they have available. What they do know is they face an ever-growing list of needs as a result of the pandemic. It is evident the 2021 budget will face significant cuts. What is not clear is where and how much they will be.

The schedule of legislative committee meetings and floor time necessary to pass the budget by May 8 has been tentatively established. While it requires a lot of things to happen according to plan, it is achievable. The schedule has some room for other legislative activity over the next two weeks, but not much. Both chambers have indicated that they plan to work the following week after passing the budget to address other legislative priorities. What those are, will depend largely on how much can be accomplished while working on the budget.

The rules for admittance to the Capitol do not provide for much opportunity for the legislators to seek outside input on the legislation they are working on. Visitors to the Capitol will be subject to screening, and they will only be allowed in certain areas. Any committees that meet must do so in rooms that can accommodate appropriate social distancing. Anyone wishing to provide input on legislation before the committee is encouraged to submit written testimony in advance. The rules for debate and voting are still being finalized. Under this structure, it is hard to imagine that anything other than high-priority non-controversial legislation could be passed.

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.