

May 1, 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 returned to Jefferson City this week. They began with the expected work on the state's 2021 budget. At the start of the week, it was not clear whether other measures would be taken up. That mystery was quickly solved as the Legislature immediately began building several large omnibus bills. While this creates efficiency in passing legislation, it makes it hard to follow what is happening and increases risks of unintended consequences.

The House began the week by taking up and passing the budget. The budget passed was substantially different than the one approved by the House Budget Committee prior to spring break. It was \$700 million smaller and included many additional contingent appropriations to allow the state to respond to federal aid that has been promised to help fund the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The budget now goes to the Senate for approval. The Legislature has one week to finish its work on the budget to comply with the constitutional deadline of May 8. At this point, they look likely to meet that deadline.

It is normal at the end of the session to build omnibus bills to try to get as many measures as possible passed. Because the Legislature took a four-week break due to the pandemic, this practice is being carried to an advanced level this year. The way this process works is that each chamber takes up legislation that has passed the other chamber and amends it with legislation that has not. In a normal year at this point, there would be a long list that had passed the chamber of origin. By not meeting for four weeks, the General Assembly has shortened that list. This means that any bill passed out of the chamber of origin is almost guaranteed to be an amendment target.

This shortage of bills available to be amended has two consequences. One is that legislation that is a low priority becomes very important just because of where it is in the process. This can result in legislation that is of limited importance getting passed because it is serving as a vehicle to pass something that is a high priority.

The other consequence of this process is it is very conducive to errors being made. In order to be considered as an amendment, legislation must match either the subject or the statute in the underlying bill. This can result in some creative drafting of amendments to make them fit on legislation that is moving. Also, because bills amended by the other chamber are not subject to another committee hearing, items that might not survive the scrutiny of a hearing can become law.

Legislation of Interest

At this point in the session, it is very difficult to track legislation because of the amendment process. MOCPA's top priorities of changes to the accountancy law and the partnership audit rules are still alive, thanks to the amendment process described above. Here are the key bills at this point:

[HB 2046](#) is now an omnibus licensing bill. It contains MOCPA's priorities of changes to eligibility to sit for the CPA exam and revisions to the peer review administrative process.

[HB 1854](#) is a local government omnibus bill that now includes the partnership audit provisions.

[SB 704](#) is the original partnership audit bill. It is now an omnibus tax bill, and it also includes the peer review language.

[SB 676](#) is another omnibus tax bill, and it includes the partnership audit provisions.

At any point, the content of these bills could change. Look for an updated list in the next two updates. A final list of legislation of importance to Missouri CPAs will be posted on MOCPA's website at the end of the session.

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.