

Government Advocacy Update



Protecting Your Interests

January 11, 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

The 101st Session of the Missouri General Assembly started last Wednesday, Jan. 6. The first week of a session after an election year is mostly ceremonial. New members are sworn in, officers are elected, and the host of pre-filed bills are read into the record. Although little work is done the first week, it is still possible to get some indications of the likely priorities for this session.

The new session began with the swearing in of 11 (out of 34) new Senators and 49 (of 163) new House members. House members were sworn-in by class to observe social distancing within the chamber. Once the session started and they took their seats, social distancing was not possible. Senators have more space in their chamber, so they were sworn in as usual and are able to maintain more space as they conduct business.

Representative Rob Vescovo of Arnold was elected Speaker of the House, and Senator Dave Schatz of Sullivan was elected President Pro-Tem of the Senate. They both gave remarks to their respective chambers to outline their priorities for the session, which include:

- Passing the state budget;
- Dealing with Medicaid expansion;
- Evaluating reforms to the education system;
- Placing state controls over local health departments;
- Redistricting based on the 2020 census; and
- Increasing funding for roads.

As the Legislature works out the details of these proposals, it will have to do so while trying to keep members, staff, and lobbyists safe in the midst of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. While both the building and the proceedings are required to remain public, there are some significant changes for this session. Large groups of visitors and schools are discouraged. All visitors to the Capitol will have to answer a series of health questions and have their temperature taken. Not all committees will be taking electronic testimony, but live streaming will be available and written testimony is encouraged. It is hoped these measures will help contain the spread of the virus among the legislators. The Capitol building is old, and most of the spaces are crowded. It is likely that there will be COVID-19 related interruptions during this session just as there were last year. Legislators will be working to get their

priorities moving early, so they are positioned to pass in the event the legislative days become limited.

Although not on the list of high-priority items, it does appear that there will be several bills of interest to MOCPA members this year. Legislation establishing economic nexus (aka the *Wayfair* fix); new deductions and credits for law enforcement and educators; and tax credits for adoption and foster parents were pre-filed. It is too early to say if this legislation will advance or what the details of a final bill will look like. Much of that will depend on the number of days the Legislature will be able to meet.

The changes in the Legislature this session have prompted MOCPA to adjust its advocacy program. Our annual CPA Day will be virtual this year on Feb. 4. While not as impactful as an in-person event, it looks to be very informative and will hopefully be easier for more members to attend. In addition to concerns about our members' health, there is no way to predict if the Legislature will even be in session at a date in the future given the possibilities for a pandemic-related shutdown. Please save the date, and watch your email for details.

Legislation of Interest

[Click here](#) to view the complete list of high-priority bills MOCPA is currently tracking. The deadline for pre-filing bills has passed. There is still a delay in having all the bills available online, but that should improve this week. The first few weeks of the session typically see a flurry of bill filings so look for the list to grow. 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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