



2021 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY POLICIES

The Florida Institute of CPAs is committed to the advancement of Florida's CPA profession. As such, the Institute believes a vital part of its service role to the membership is to both propose and comment on policies and procedures that affect the profession.

With this in mind, the Committee on State Legislative Policy developed the 2021 FICPA Legislative and Regulatory Policies. Through the promulgation and support of these policies, the FICPA's intent is for the profession to maintain the highest possible standards of professionalism while protecting the needs and exceeding the expectations of the general public.

Annually, existing policies are distributed to applicable subject matter experts within the FICPA for their review and comment. Their comments regarding existing policies and their identification of issues requiring new policies are used to assist the State Legislative Policy Committee in developing legislative policy for the current fiscal year. The legislative policies of the FICPA for the current fiscal year are listed on the following pages and segregated into eight broad categories as follows:

1. Tax/State Tax
2. Licensure
3. Peer Review
4. Constitutional/Legislative
5. Auditing & Accounting
6. Common Interest Realty Associations (CIRA)
7. State & Local Government
8. Department of Business & Professional Regulation (DBPR)/Florida Board of Accountancy (BOA)

The FICPA Board of directors approved the 2021 FICPA Legislative and Regulatory Policies on Sept. 23, 2020.

The FICPA is committed to monitoring the implementation of legislation and the rule-making process that is responding to the changing marketplace for CPA services, while maintaining protection of the public and the integrity of the CPA credential, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Tax/State Tax

Florida Corporate/Personal Income Tax:

1. Oppose any statutory or regulatory change that would be placed on the preparer requirements to file unemployment compensation tax returns and/or penalties for same.

2. Support legislation that would continue to conform the Florida Corporate Income Tax to the latest version of the Federal Internal Revenue Code (piggy-backing) and oppose any new tax including any value added, gross receipts on Subchapter S corporations, limited partnerships, general partnerships, limited liability partnerships, limited liability companies, or any other flow-through entities.
3. Oppose any effort to re-institute the Intangibles Tax.
4. Maintain the current Florida Taxpayer's Bill of Rights. Support the addition of the following rights to the taxpayer's bill of rights:
 - a. The right to freedom from imposition of penalties barring a determination that the taxpayer's failure to comply with the revenue law is due to reasonable cause.
 - b. The right to appeal tax assessments or penalties to an independent administrative law judge without paying the contested amount.
5. Support legislation or efforts by the Governor that provides for responsible tax reduction.
6. Support any effort to provide state tax relief to practitioners and citizens that are impacted by a natural disaster.
7. Oppose revenue-based taxes on services provided by CPAs and CPA firms, including, but not limited to, a sales tax on those services.
8. Oppose any additional reporting requirements that would create a conflict with existing state reporting deadlines or create an undue or unreasonable burden on taxpayers

Sales Tax:

1. Support the FICPA's continual review of the Certified Audit Program with the Department of Revenue and pursue legislative enhancements to the program.
2. Support legislation that would require the Department of Revenue to send notices of liens or final assessments by certified mail to the last known address of the taxpayer.
3. Support requiring the Department of Revenue (DOR) to standardize audit procedures for both assessment and refund purposes to utilize identical standardized review techniques and encourage the DOR to trace all rules biannually to respective Statutes.
4. Support the current three-year statute of limitations on voluntary disclosure of tax liability to the Department of Revenue.
5. Support legislation to expand the Certified Audit Program to allow recipients of Notices of Intent to Audit to use a special Department of Revenue (DOR) certified private auditor in lieu of an audit by the DOR.
6. Support legislation that creates a statewide framework for collecting sales tax on remote sales and relieves Florida citizens from remitting use taxes.

Property Tax:

1. Support the personal property tax return filing statute to keep the filing date at April 1 but provide for a mandatory 30-day extension if the request is filed by the due date. In addition, an additional 15-day extension may be granted at the discretion of the property appraiser.
2. Coordinate with the property appraisers in creating a mechanism for taxpayers to obtain detailed tangible personal property tax assessment data and/or support legislation that would require property appraiser's offices to make available to taxpayers or authorized preparers the details of tangible personal property annual valuations.
3. Support statewide uniform compliance procedures and forms for the tangible personal property tax.
4. Support legislation that provides reasonable reductions to Sales Tax on commercial rentals.

Communications Services Tax:

1. Continue to monitor legislation and rules affecting the fair and equitable administration of Florida Communication Services Tax consistent with the legislative intent.

2. Licensure

1. Support state societies, legislative bodies and others who seek a "reasoned approach" to considering changes that fit within a uniform regulatory format for the CPA profession that fosters, rather than inhibits, interstate professional practice. Actively participate in proposed legislative changes on the state level in response to federal legislation regarding accounting regulation.
2. Aggressively seek enforcement of the provisions allowing the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) to impose administrative (civil) fines on unlicensed individuals using the term "public accountant" or otherwise practicing public accounting. Encourage DBPR to actively seek injunctive relief against non-licensees violating Chapter 455 F.S. or Chapter 473, F.S.
3. Retain the 150-hour education requirement for licensure. Examine curriculum requirements to determine if adjustments are warranted to provide uniformity between states.
4. Retain the requirement for one year of work experience prior to licensure. The work experience must include employment in public practice, private business, government, education, include any type of service or advice involving the use of accounting, attest, compilation, management advisory, tax or consulting skills and must be verified by a CPA licensed by a state or territory.
5. Retain the individual CPA mobility provision to allow an individual who does not have an office in Florida to provide public accounting services in this state without obtaining

a license, notifying or registering with the board, or paying a fee if the individual holds a valid, substantially equivalent individual license.

6. Support efforts to create a CPA firm mobility provision under Florida's firm licensure statute, 473.3101 F.S., to allow firms to provide services in Florida without obtaining a license, notifying or registering with the board, or paying a fee under the condition that any legislation/rules require the CPA firm to meet all requirements outlined under the Uniform Accountancy Act Seventh Edition Section 7(a)(C).
7. Support the creation of "Retired CPA" status for "inactive" Florida licensees at least 55 years of age as described in the 8th Version of the Uniform Accountancy Act and pursuant to the safeguards in 473.301 F.S.

Licensure Exemptions:

1. Support the statutory exemption of licensed CPAs from certain insurance licensing requirements, provided they are acting within the scope of the practice of public accounting as defined in Chapter 473, F.S. The exemption is limited to advising clients of the necessity of obtaining insurance, the amount of insurance needed, or the line of coverage needed. The exemption is applicable only if the CPA does not receive or share in a commission, referral, or solicitor's fee in which case the CPA would need to have the appropriate insurance license. Continue communication with the insurance industry and the Office of Insurance Regulation under the Department of Financial Services on various insurance licensing issues.
2. Support the statutory exemption for licensed CPAs from private investigative licensing requirements when recovering unclaimed property on behalf of clients during the normal course of practice pursuant to Chapter 473, F.S.
3. Support the statutory exemption of licensed CPAs from investment adviser requirements when such services rendered to clients are solely incidental to their practice pursuant to Chapter 473, F.S. If compensation is given by a third party for that advice, then this exemption would not apply and must be disclosed to the client.
4. Support the statutory exemption for licensed CPAs from real estate licensing requirements when acting within the scope of the practice of public accounting as defined in Chapter 473, F.S.
5. Support the continuation of CPAs qualification to serve as certified circuit, county, insurance and family mediators, and actively pursue changes in other laws and regulations to expand the roles of CPAs in mediation and arbitration.
6. Support the statutory exemption for licensed CPAs from standards that would be in direct conflict with professional standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.
7. Support legislation that would ensure public record exemptions for local government audits and investigations.

Other Licensure Issues:

8. Continue to oppose the licensure of a second tier of accountant and monitor “safe harbor” language regarding financial statements prepared by others to guide non-licensed accountants and bookkeepers and to help prevent the unauthorized practice of public accounting.
9. Support 473.309, F.S. allowing a simple majority (51 percent) of the ownership of a Florida CPA firm (in terms of financial interests and voting rights) to belong to CPAs. Any non-CPA owner would have to be actively engaged as a firm member in providing services to the firm’s clients as his or her principal occupation. Ownership by investors or commercial enterprises would be prohibited.
10. Continue to oppose the licensure of other individuals or entities not presently licensed to provide financial or tax-related services.
11. Continue to support the administration of the Uniform CPA Examination. Any translations for foreign-trained professionals should be to overcome language barriers only and should be the exact questions found in the Uniform CPA Examination.
12. Support the continuation of a uniform CPA exam offered in an electronic manner.
13. Support the following current policies regarding continuing professional education (CPE):
 - a. Support the existing requirement of at least 80 hours of CPE during each two-year re-establishment period. However, no less than eight hours will be required to be in A&A courses and a minimum of five percent of the total hours will be required in ethics. Maintain the current CPE requirements as provided in 473.317, F.S., and the related rules. Maintain the current classification of courses, as well as the requirements for inactive and delinquent status, as provided in 473.313, F.S.
 - b. Support additional specificity for required ethics courses to include a majority of Florida Laws and Rules content including 473, F.S., 455, F.S. and related administrative rules.
 - c. Continue to favor an emphasis on technical CPE courses and a de-emphasis on courses dealing with behavioral topics. Support the existing limit on the number of behavioral course hours that can be taken for credit.
 - d. Monitor and evaluate any form of mandatory pre-or post-exam for CPE courses.
 - e. Support CPE Reciprocity as defined in the UAA Model Rules with the additional requirement of Florida specific ethics for non-resident licensees seeking renewal
 - f. Support reporting of licensure renewal requirements by licensees and oppose any mandatory reporting of an individual’s CPE records to the state by a CPE provider.

3. Peer Review

1. Support the implementation of Peer Review as a requirement for firm re-licensure and work with the Board of Accountancy to establish with the following critical safeguards:
 - a. The focus of the program is educational and remedial to assist firms to improve the quality of their accounting and auditing practices.
 - b. The Peer Review requirements follow the “Standards for Performing & Reporting on Peer Reviews” as issued by the AICPA.
 - c. A firm’s peer review results remain confidential and will not be made part of any public record. The only exceptions to the confidentiality requirement would be if a firm receives two consecutive “fail” peer review reports or for a firm’s material non-cooperation with the Peer Review Program.
 - d. Maintain the current statutory requirement that exempts from discovery in state court all information collected through a Peer Review.
 - e. Continue to oppose any other forms of regulatory practice monitoring programs including, “open and random inspections” or mandatory submission of client information to the Board of Accountancy or any other government agencies.

4. Constitutional/Legislative

1. Support efforts to preserve the Florida Constitution as the principal framework defining the lawmaking abilities of the legislature, the basic rights of Florida citizens, and the structure of state government.
2. Oppose revenue-based taxes on services provided by CPAs and CPA firms, including, but not limited to, a sales tax on those services.
3. Oppose or challenge any action (involving the practice of public accounting or the delivery of public accounting services to the public) by state agencies that lack adequate statutory authority.
4. Support legislation and regulatory initiatives that promote efficient and appropriate delivery of government services through privatization and which do not conflict with professional standards or create an “expectation gap” that ultimately reflects poorly on the profession.

Actively participate in the efforts of the Florida Justice Reform Institute and encourage the Florida Legislature to enact legal liability reform, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Support the current statutes related to proportionate liability and oppose any effort to re-institute the Doctrine of Joint and Several Liability.
- b. Reasonably limit punitive damage awards.

- c. Establish a maximum or reduced level for contingent fees, such as attorney's fees.
 - d. Support a uniform statute of limitations for actions against CPAs based on one year from the date the alleged act, omission or neglect is discovered, or should have been discovered by the exercise of reasonable diligence. However, in no event shall the action be commenced later than three years after the service for which the suit is brought has been performed, or the date of the initial issuance of the accountant's report on the financial statements or other information, whichever comes first.
5. Continue to favor the present statutory requirement in s.11.42, F.S., that the Auditor General of the State of Florida be a CPA licensed in Florida for at least 10 years.
 6. Support legislation to require the Auditor General of the State of Florida to adhere to the Florida Administrative Procedures Act.
 7. Monitor and participate in the technical corrections of legislation on the Florida Uniform Principal & Income Act. Coordinate meetings between the FICPA, The Florida Bar's Real Property, Probate and Trust Law Section, and the Florida Bankers Association. Disseminate information on the Florida Uniform Principal & Income Act to other state CPA societies as needed.
 8. Support active participation of CPAs in legislative and executive branches of Florida Government initiatives to promote financial literacy.
 9. Support legislation that provides that the court shall determine fair compensation to be paid to Florida CPAs when they are subpoenaed to testify in their capacity as a CPA in any action or proceeding. The fee would be paid by any party issuing the subpoena other than the state.
 10. Continue to support CPA privileged communications – 473.316, F.S.
 11. Support the establishment of a privity statute (1) denying parties not in privity with the CPA standing to seek recovery from a CPA, and (2) requiring financial institutions desiring privity to obtain written privity acknowledgment from the CPA before the CPA has rendered the report or furnished other information upon which the financial institution intends to rely.

5. Auditing and Accounting

1. Oppose any requirement of mandatory rotation of auditors and/or engagement partners on any entity regulated by statute.
2. Support the Florida Board of Accountancy in the implementation of 11.40, F.S. as an agreed upon procedure.
3. Oppose any statutory or regulatory changes in the Low-THC Cannabis/Charlotte's Web Act or similar cannabis-related businesses that would require licensees to perform functions in conflict with Chapter 473, F.S. or professional standards.

4. Support the inclusion of the UAA Seventh Edition section 3(b) definition of “attest” within the definition of “attest” included in Chapter 473, F.S. or in Board rule.
5. Oppose any requirement for a CPA performing services for the Florida Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship program to be required to provide any services that would be in direct conflict with professional standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and support the implementation of uniform and consistent materiality guidelines under law.

6. Common Interest Realty Associations (CIRA)

1. Support legislative and regulatory activity to provide for consistency between Chapter 718, F.S (Condominium Associations); Chapter 719, F.S. (Co-Operatives); Chapter 720, F.S. (Homeowners Associations); and Chapter 721, F.S. (Timeshares) and related administrative rules.
2. Monitor any proposed legislative or regulatory changes in the area of Common Interest Realty Association accounting and auditing issues.
3. Support legislation to define level of accounting services required of the CIRA.

7. State and Local Government

1. Support efforts to enforce compliance with auditor selection procedures set forth in s. 218.391, F.S.
2. Support actions necessary to ensure that a firm’s “work papers,” as set forth in s. 473.318, Florida Statutes, would not be considered “public records” for the purposes of Florida’s Public Records Act (Chapter 119, F.S.) when an independent CPA firm provides professional services for a State of Florida governmental agency or entity.
3. Support efforts to ensure that at least one member of the audit committee set forth in s.218.391, F.S. has a background in accounting or governmental financial reporting.
4. Support legislation requiring local governments meeting a specified threshold to undergo a periodic operational audit to determine compliance with applicable laws, rules and regulations.

8. Department of Business & Professional Regulation (DBPR)/ Florida Board of Accountancy (BOA)

1. Support the Board of Accountancy in its decision to move to another agency or stay within the current structure at the Department of Business and Professional Regulation.
2. Support the statutory requirement for the Board of Accountancy to be located in Gainesville.
3. Oppose the use of trust fund dollars collected by the Board of Accountancy for any other issues other than those stated in s. 473.3035, F.S.

4. Support legislation that would require the Department of Business and Professional Regulation to send notices of license suspension or revocation by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the licensee.
5. Support the Board of Accountancy in their ability to adopt all professional standards as long as they do not conflict with any existing legislative policy.
6. Support the Board of Accountancy to seek “emergency suspension” power for the Department of Business and Professional Regulation in cases of intentional violations of an agency final order by a licensee.
7. Support the Board of Accountancy to allow community service as an alternative to certain administrative fines.
8. Oppose the use of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation resources to resolve civil disputes between non-licensed professionals and consumers performing non-licensed activities.
9. Support a reasonable statute of limitations (preferably not to exceed three years) for violations of Florida laws and rules regarding the practice of public accounting. However, such statute would not be applicable to cases involving fraud [see statute of limitations for civil matters, s. 95.11(4)(a), F.S.].
10. Coordinate with the Board of Accountancy (BOA) and seek appropriations for the Clay Ford Scholarship Program as defined in statute, as well as cross marketing with the FICPA Scholarship Foundation to provide scholarship funds to accounting students. Support the BOA legislation to allow the balance of any unused scholarship funds in any year to be carried forward and awarded in a future year.
11. Support the Board of Accountancy’s ability to adjust CPA examination fees to accommodate the anticipated increased cost related to computerized testing, if needed. Support any revisions to s. 473.305, F.S., to be consistent with the implementation of the Uniform CPA Exam.
12. Support the use of a portion of CPA license fees earmarked for the unlicensed-activity funds to inform the public that some services may be unregulated if performed by a non-CPA.

“From the funds in Specific Appropriation 1999, up to \$100,000 from the Professional Regulation Trust Fund is provided to the Department of Business and Professional Regulation to institute an unlicensed activity campaign for the purpose of informing and educating the public: (1) that public accounting is a regulated profession with requirements of licensure pursuant to chapter 473, Florida Statutes; (2) that some services provided by unlicensed individuals, although legal, are regulated when provided by a licensed Florida Certified Public Accountant; and, (3) that certain services may only be performed by a licensed Florida Certified Public Accountant. The department shall develop the campaign in consultation with a corporation that is registered under chapter 617, Florida Statutes, as a not-for-profit corporation and qualified under the Internal Revenue Service”.

13. Support a regulatory framework for the Board of Accountancy that is efficient, effective and fair in safeguarding the public and fulfilling public policy and regulatory functions and requirements.
14. Establish the Board of Accountancy as the agency responsible to:
 - a. Approve the content and form of the auditor's report on financial information requirements of state agencies, thereby eliminating conflicts in the standards of the practice of public accounting;
 - b. Establish the form and content of financial information as requested by other state agencies; and
 - c. Fulfill the statutory directives and legislative intent of provisions in Chapter 473, F.S.
15. Continue to favor current statutory provisions regarding qualifications of Board of Accountancy members. Encourage the Governor to take into consideration geographic, demographic, public and private accounting experience when appointing Board of Accountancy members.
16. Monitor the assessment of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation fines to be sure they are administered in a fair and uniform manner and are rehabilitative and not punitive.
17. Monitor s. 473.319, F.S. and s. 473.3205, F.S. relating to the acceptance of commissions and referral fees, except involving attest engagements, with written disclosure of the fact. Support rules related to disclosure of commissions that are no more stringent than current standards established by laws, rules or codes of conduct commonly used to regulate or voluntarily direct the disclosure of such activities.
18. Permit the acceptance of contingent fees, except for audits, reviews, financial statement preparation engagements and expert witnesses.
19. Continue to support a comprehensive review of Florida laws and rules pertaining to the practice of public accounting in comparison to the Uniform Accountancy Act (UAA).
20. Support legislation to remove antiquated barriers to the profession that are no longer viable or relevant without compromising the professions core principles of independence, objectivity, and professional standards.
21. Support legislation allowing for charging liens to be filed for collections of fees due for services rendered.
22. Support efforts by the Board of Accountancy to provide regulatory guidance to licensee regarding the clarification of state law when it presents a conflict with federal law.
23. Support legislation that grants state regulatory boards and member's immunity from personal liability for actions taken in good faith in carrying out board duties; and

indemnifies state boards and members from any damages or litigation fees related to claims against them to which the immunity applies.

24. Support efforts by the Board of Accountancy to add the suspension or revocation of the right to practice by the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB) to s. 473.323, F.S. as grounds for which disciplinary action can be taken against a licensee.

9. COVID-19 Recovery

1. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on Florida's economy, the FICPA supports legislative and regulatory actions developed by the FICPA's State Legislative Policy Committee that encourage economic growth, reduce regulatory burdens, provide relief for businesses and citizens, and streamlines compliance, to the extent that is consistent with the existing legislative policies.
2. Support legislation protecting businesses from frivolous COVID-19 claims which, at a minimum, includes heightened culpability and evidentiary standards, shortened statute of limitations and immunity for essential businesses.

FICPA Administrative Policies

1. The Board of Directors is authorized to modify or establish the FICPA's Legislative and Regulatory Policies as circumstances warrant within 45 calendar days prior to any regular or special session of the Legislature, or when the Legislature is in session.
2. The CEO or their designee is instructed and authorized to represent the Institute before state governmental authorities and the public to support the policies, goals and objectives of the FICPA.
3. The FICPA should continue to be actively involved in broad public-policy areas that will have a direct or indirect effect on the profession, such as tax reform, governmental financial accountability and efficiency, human resource development and such.
4. Support any agency's ability to utilize emergency rule making authority when directed by the legislature.

As of: Sept. 23, 2020