
HD.3145/SD.1276

An Act relative to modernizing the pathway to becoming a certified public accountant

Sponsored by: Representative Mark Cusack and Senator John Cronin

Purpose: To introduce an alternative pathway to CPA licensure while maintaining essential standards for education, experience, and exam requirements to ensure license mobility.

The accounting profession is facing a critical talent shortage, prompting organizations like the Massachusetts Society of CPAs (MassCPAs) and other state CPA societies to seek solutions to improve the CPA talent pipeline.

Background

Currently, candidates in Massachusetts must meet the following criteria to become a Certified Public Accountant (CPA):

- **Education:** Earn a bachelor's degree and complete 150 college credits, including 30 credit hours in accounting and 24 credit hours in general business (this often involves earning a master's degree or additional coursework).
- **Experience:** Complete one year of experience in public accounting or three years in non-public accounting. (One year is defined as 2000 hours).
- **CPA Exam:** Pass all four sections of the Uniform CPA Exam within 30 months.

Proposed Changes

MassCPAs is advocating to preserve the current licensure pathway while introducing an alternative option to address workforce challenges. The proposed legislation establishes an additional pathway requiring:

- **Education:** A bachelor's degree, still including 30 credit hours in accounting and 24 credit hours in general business
- **Experience:** Two years of relevant work experience. (One year is defined as 2000 hours).
- **CPA Exam:** Successful completion of all four sections of the Uniform CPA Exam within 30 months.

Key Provisions

- **Dual Pathways:** Maintains the existing licensure requirements while introducing a new alternative that combines a bachelor's degree, two years of experience, and CPA exam completion.
- **License Mobility:** Ensures CPAs licensed in other states can relocate to Massachusetts and retain their license, subject to approval by the Massachusetts Board of Public Accountancy.
- **Regional and National Advocacy:** MassCPAs is collaborating with other New England states and CPA societies nationwide to promote legislative changes that create a consistent, modernized approach to CPA licensure.

Benefits

- **Addresses Talent Shortages:** Expands pathways for candidates to join the CPA profession, helping to alleviate the current talent pipeline challenges.
- **Maintains Professional Standards:** Ensures the integrity of the CPA credential by upholding rigorous education, experience, and examination requirements.
- **Improves License Portability:** Facilitates interstate mobility for CPAs, supporting a more flexible and competitive accounting workforce.

For more information

Contact Molly Sullivan, VP of Government Affairs at msullivan@masscpas.org with any questions.