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We're in a biennial life cycle. Newest two-year cycle is on. - by Allan Cohen

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City of Newton

We're in a biennial life cycle. USPAP updates every two years. And the state legislature takes up new bills every two years.

January marked the start of another two-year cycle in the general court. New bills replaced old bills. Great intentions of 2015-2016 give way to grand hopes in the new, two-year cycle of bills filed for 2017-2018. For appraisers, this means four new bills focusing on our profession.

MBREA's Steve Sousa and government affairs committee presented four bills for this new season. Three are based upon bills filed in the past session but with a few twists and alterations. Themes of the three returning bills:

- 1) registration of AMC's operating in Massachusetts;
- 2) property valuations to be provided by licensed appraisers; and
- 3) consumers need to timely file inquiries and complaints within a reasonable time period to coincide with record retention.

The fourth bill clarifies clients and intended users. As of this writing, the AMC bill is known as House Bill number 577 (H. 577) and the bill stating appraisers are the source for valuations is known as Senate Bill number 104 (S. 104). The other two bills await numbers.

When the 2015-2016 sessions closed and our four prior bills died after achieving some success in either the house or senate, but not both, Sousa gathered ideas from appraisers and other states' appraisal boards for ideas and new attempts at legislation. He examined the causes of bills not passing in past cycles and re-wrote bills for the new cycle. Appraisers from across the state then sought senate and house sponsors, and as the 2017-2018 season commenced, new sponsors came on board.

AMC bill H. 577 starts in the fast lane. Appraisal management company registration is a requirement per Dodd-Frank. When signed into law in 2010, The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act called for firewalls to be established between lenders and appraisers. Third party appraisal managers would take lenders' requests for appraisal reports and arrange for their completion. The goal of adding an intermediary was to remove direct contact and appearance of deal making between lenders and appraisers. Also, Dodd-Frank's call for AMC's is an attempt to lessen pressures placed on appraisers to be market makers and hit predetermined values. About forty states have completed the task. Massachusetts, relying on the extensions granted under Dodd-Frank, must meet deadlines effective in 2018.

John Scibak, state representative from the 2nd Hampshire District, and Barbara L'Italien, senator from 2nd Essex and Middlesex , co-sponsored the bill for this new cycle. Appraisers owe their gratitude to these two legislators whose support at the outset of this legislative session assures wider interest and balance from the house and senate.

Support by representative Scibak and senator L'Italien on day one of the new session helped attract eight additional co-sponsors: James Timilty – senator from Bristol and Norfolk, Cynthia Creem – senator from 1st Middlesex and Norfolk, Richard Ross- senator from Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex, Josh Cutler – representative from 6th Plymouth, Jason Lewis – representative from 5th Middlesex, Thomas Calter - representative from 12th Plymouth, David Linsky – representative from 5th Middlesex, and David Vieira – representative from 3rd Barnstable.

You can see from the list, MBREA's government affairs committee and others obtained sponsors for the new AMC bill from broad areas of the state and with a balanced mix of republicans and democrats from the house and senate.

Full text of the bill can be downloaded at <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/190/H577>.

The newest two-year cycle is on.

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