

WEST VIRGINIA CENTRAL NEWSPAPER
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Governor Justice Issues Letter to All State Employees

To All State Employees:

The Compensation Package that I have put forth will move the state significantly forward with hope for more in the years to come.

Dale Lee and David Haney at the WVEA, Christine Campbell and Bob Brown from the AFT and Joe White, from the School Service Personnel, and myself worked diligently to pull off an incredible package for the state workers of West Virginia. This happened as a result of many of the things I heard from the people that came out to the Town Hall meetings on Monday.

But most of all a little boy that had a lot of wisdom, named Gideon. Gideon reinforced a philosophy of treating education as an investment and as an economic driver. This is the way we ought to look at education. I've said this many, many times that we all need to look at education this way.

Input has also been provided from many good legislators. Our Legislature has worked very hard as well to help us achieve goodness for education and all of our state workers. Again, it was my promise to the union representatives that in the years to come we will continue to revisit pay raises.

I have issued an Executive Order today creating a special Task Force, that will include Educators and nothing but West Virginians. That Task Force is being formed right now and will be appointed by the end of the week to address and explore all avenues that will lead to a permanent fix for PEIA. It is important that everyone understand that identifying all of the issues in our healthcare program and finding a solution takes time. A cure won't come in 30 minutes, but I can promise you this Task Force will begin its work immediately.

While I have placed a moratorium on PEIA for 16 months, finding a solution to this problem needs to be accomplished in a much, much shorter period of time.

There are several possibilities that will be looked at for the revenue we need to solve the PEIA issues once and for all. The possibilities of additional severance taxes on oil and gas, gaming revenue from sports betting, tax dollars being generated from our roads projects, continuing growth in our economy and the possibility of putting the insurance out for competitive bids are just a few; everything is going to be looked at.

I've believed from day one that education should be our centerpiece, and I continue to follow that same philosophy today.

Jim Justice
Governor of West Virginia

MANCHIN APPOINTED TO BIPARTISAN, BICAMERAL COMMITTEE TO SOLVE MINER PENSION CRISIS

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) was appointed to a bipartisan, bicameral Joint Select Committee tasked with solving the pension crisis that is threatening more than 87,000 coal miners nationwide, including nearly 27,000 in West Virginia. The solution that the Committee produces will be guaranteed an expedited vote in the Senate with no amendments. The Committee was included as part of the overall budget agreement that was passed two weeks ago. "In West Virginia we have nearly 27,000 coal miners that are facing uncertainty due to the impending loss of their hard-earned pensions and the creation of this joint committee is an important step in the right direction," Senator Manchin said. "These miners earned their pensions through a lifetime of the hardest work imaginable. They did so safe in the knowledge that they would find these pensions waiting for them down the road to support them and their loved ones in their retired years. We must keep our promise and I look forward to working on the committee and with the UMWA to make sure we do."

Senator Manchin has been fighting for a solution to the pension crisis for years through the Miners Protection Act and the recent American Miners Pension Act (AMP Act). The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) pension plans are currently on the brink of failure. If nothing is done to the plans, they will fail and retirees will face massive cuts to the benefits they earned over decades of work.

If UMWA pension plan is allowed to fail, not only will they no longer be able to pay promised benefits, but taxpayers would be at risk of having to pay billions because the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC) would be on the hook for billions of dollars it cannot pay. PBGC is the arm of the federal government that insures pension plans. Last month, Senator Manchin asked the PBGC to provide information on the solvency of its Multiemployer Program in the face of this impending crisis.

Gov. Justice signs pay raise bill

CHARLESTON, WV – Gov. Jim Justice has signed legislation today that will provide teachers, school service personnel and state police with a 2 percent pay increase starting in July and has taken the steps in the budget to include a 2 percent pay raise for all other state employees effective July 1 as well.

Teachers are also scheduled to get an additional 1 percent hike in each of the following two years, FY 2020 and 2021, while school service personnel and state police will get an additional 1 percent in FY 2020.

Gov. Justice said that members of the West Virginia Legislature "did the responsible thing to help our teachers and state employees" by passing the pay raise package.

"We need to keep our kids and teachers in the classroom," Gov. Justice said. "We certainly recognize our teachers are underpaid and this is a step in the right direction to addressing their pay issue. The PEIA board has also voted to approve changes I recommended - I've asked and the PEIA board has voted to eliminate the mandated participation in the Go365 program, the use of combined household income to determine rates, and to freeze the plan for 16 months while we examine it and enact a long-term solution to the PEIA problems."

"Now we need to turn our focus back to continuing public education reforms and making our state educational system the best in the country."

MANCHIN AND CAPITO ANNOUNCE MORE THAN \$1 MILLION FOR WV COAL COMMUNITIES

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, today announced that WorkForce West Virginia has been awarded \$1,054,000 from the U.S. Department of Labor.

"There is no denying the harmful effects of the last Administration's regulatory policies on West Virginia's economies," Senator Manchin said. "But West Virginians are resilient and organizations like WorkForce West Virginia provide training and resources for our hardworking men and women. I am glad DOL has recognized the importance of WorkForce West Virginia's programs by making this investment in our state."

"As we continue to ease the burden placed on the coal industry by misguided federal policies, it is important that we take care of our miners and provide them new opportunities to earn a living," Senator Capito said. "This funding will help current and future participants in reemployment programs further their career and provide for their families."

The National Dislocated Worker Grant will provide for the continuation of reemployment services to participants and currently enrolled, as well as for a projected 200 individuals recently affected by industry layoffs.



Logic

By Joe Ingino b.a.
Editor/Publisher

"I live a dream in a nightmare world"

Stomping On The World

They are calling him a dictator... all because he acts in the best interest of his country. In the best interest of his people. For too long nations like China have been raping our work force our economies and our economy. It is time to turn the table around. Men like Trump are far from few. There is guy that is not taking one red tax payers cent for reenumeration. Is under constant attack by the media. Yet everything he seems to put his mind to do he gets it done. Sure he may be arrogant, a little self centered... but think about it... He is human and if you or I were put in his place would we not have the same qualities in our leadership... People need to stop the bashing and start appreciating change. Change has a price and in this modern time it appears that bitching is it. Ok stop laughing. You know what I mean... It appears that we our civic conscious is the more we hate something the more we want it... The more it succeeds the more we look to dethrone it. People let's all take a deep breath and appreciate the moment. A moment that is putting jobs back in America. A moment that is putting China in it's place. Why should we bare the burden of job loss and a trade deficit in the Billions. Nancy Reagan had it right with her boots... and they are made for walking all over you... Go Trump Go. Please liberate Canada from our political unic's that serve as a servant in the Forbidden foreign cultural agendas.

Gov. Justice issues statement to Educators, Service Personnel and other Government Workers To Our Educators, Service Personnel, and other Government Workers

A little over one year ago I was sworn in as your Governor. At that time, our State was bankrupt for all practical purposes. A \$500 Million deficit, growing to nearly \$772 Million in the following years, and nowhere to turn was exactly where we were. You had to have little hope. All of us had to feel this way. The biggest gift I delivered to all of you across our State was a solution, a plan, a dream, and it worked. Today, we are on our way. I hope!

I promised you to always do one thing – Tell the truth. Now let's reflect: I have always stood rock solid for education. I think education should be our centerpiece. In the darkest time, the Senate supported my 2 percent pay raise and at crunch time the House Democrats were not supportive. I went to the mat for this but it failed. Now we have an election year and many, many of those that opposed are now running through the streets yelling for more to get your votes. PLEASE. Now, I want you to read this quote when I announced my plan last year for a 2 percent raise for teachers:

"This is refreshing. We know the Governor has been talking about it, but this actually feels like walking the walk and saying we do want to keep teachers in West Virginia."

Who said that just a year ago?

That was Christine Campbell, president of the American Federation of Teachers in West Virginia. Dale Lee, president of the West Virginia Education Association, also said this at that time.

"I'm glad that Governor Justice recognized that we have to address the teacher salary issue to attract teachers to the classroom."

Two weeks ago, I attended Town Hall meetings in Logan and Greenbrier counties. We had a variety of teachers present to discuss all these issues facing them today. The No. 1 issue in both meetings was fixing our state employee health insurance plan, PEIA. I've asked and the PEIA board has voted to eliminate the mandated participation in the Go365 program, the use of combined household income to determine rates, and to freeze the plan for 16 months while we examine it and enact a long-term solution to the PEIA problems that may exist. This alone will cost the state an additional \$29 million a year. Each 1 percent of a statewide pay raise costs an additional \$23 Million.

In the past year, my appointments to our great State Board of Education have 1) gotten rid of A thru F grading our schools, 2) gotten rid of all the ridiculous testing we were doing, 3) moved issues out of the Charleston bureaucracy and back to local control and even, 4) given flexibility on the school calendar back to the counties. How long have we had to put up with these burdens that are now gone?

Now, if you choose you may throw rocks at the very man that has stood steadfast in your camp. I promise you nobody knows for sure that we are out of the woods. I know our teachers are underpaid and underappreciated. But I also know that our teachers and families want us not to slip back and find our families again leaving our state seeking employment and opportunity.

I feel that many Democrats that could have helped you dove in the ditch last year and are now grandstanding because of the election year. I feel the Republicans are trying to be cautious and prudent to assure our State won't fall back and be doomed to be 50th to forever. And, I know that is exactly what I'm trying to do. I promise I will support all that can possibly be done and we will find a permanent fix for PEIA. I do this because I love all our teachers, service personnel, and especially all our children.

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