
NEWS RELEASE

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(Please note – WVEA President Dale Lee is unavailable this week. Please direct your questions to the numbers above.)

October 2, 2018 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement from WVEA Executive Director David Haney regarding the comments from Governor Justice

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Let me begin by saying that we are pleased attention is being given to two of our key issues – salary and PEIA. Education employees need to continue to receive annual salary increases to compete with other states/industries and PEIA certainly needs to be fixed.

It is clearly because of our actions in the spring and our members work for pro-education candidates in the election that led to the governor’s press conference and the invitation for Republican senators to stand with him.

And I am sure it is just a coincidence that the timing of the announcement occurs right before early voting begins and while absentee ballots are out.

Much of his statement was simply election year rhetoric that we have heard for decades. We’ve heard politicians in election years make promises before but when the legislative session/time for action rolls around those promises are not fulfilled.

Simply standing behind the governor today does not mean the senators are friends of education. Many of them have cast votes against our public schools, education employees’ rights and working West Virginians during the last few legislative sessions. Nearly everyone says they are pro-education during the campaign but their voting records and statements during the session indicate otherwise.

It is ironic that the same Republicans standing behind the governor today are the ones who questioned his revenue estimates during the legislative session. They questioned whether the money was there for a 1% salary increase and now they have no questions about a proposed \$100 million budget allocation plus a 5% pay increase for all education and state employees.

And finally, putting money into a reserve fund is not fixing the problems of PEIA. Using one-time money for ongoing expenses had been done many times by previous administrations and has not worked. That short-sided Band-Aid approach has contributed to the problems PEIA faces today.

The fundamental problems with PEIA must be addressed and that is why the Task Force was created. Privatization will most likely lead to higher costs for both the state and the employees.

While we do appreciate the desire to address the issues of salary and PEIA, it is hard to separate the issues from the electioneering for senators who are clearly in trouble because of their actions during the spring.

WVEA is the largest teacher organization in the state and is the state affiliate of the 3 million member National Education Association (NEA). WVEA represents teachers, education support professionals, higher education professionals and classified staff, retirees and college students pursuing a career in education.