

2018 WV Legislative Session

March 7, 2018

We would like to congratulate not only service personnel but all education employees on this hard-fought win. The events of the last nine days show the true power of a united front. This would not have been possible without service personnel and teachers working together with the support of the superintendents, county boards of education and the community in all 55 counties.

There are many questions about the raise, PEIA and other legislation that affect education. PEIA was the catalyst for this movement. Early on in this process the Governor and the Legislature urged the PEIA Finance Board to place a moratorium on the plan changes for 2019 year. This removed GO365, premiums based on family income and unfair tier changes making those that made the least to pay the most. The Governor also appropriated \$29 million from the state budget to stabilize PEIA.

As part of the negotiations with the Governor and the Legislature, a task force was formed to address all issues with PEIA before the 2020-year plan. This task force will find long term financial stability by addressing the following: premium costs, plan coverage, reducing medical costs, and any other issues the task force would like to address. The task force members will include the following:

- The Governor's Chief of Staff will serve as chair.
- One current member of the PEIA finance board.
- Three members of the Senate.
- Three members of the House of Delegates.
- A representative from each of the education associations: WVSSPA, AFT-WV and WVEA.
- Three full-time public employees, one retired public employee, and one retired education employee.
- Seven individuals with knowledge and experience in the insurance industry.

Through the passage of House Bill 4145 service personnel, teachers and state troopers will see a 5% raise. All service personnel will see an increase of \$1100, this amount was determined by taking 5% from an average of service personnel salaries. This is **NOT** a bonus but will be added to the pay scale. Service personnel will also continue to receive their increment raise. Despite rumors, the funds for this pay raise was not taken from Medicaid or by levying additional taxes on the citizens of West Virginia. All other public employees not addressed in House Bill 4145 will see a 5% raise through the State Budget.

Other pieces of legislation attacking the rights of education employees have been pulled or died in committee:

- Bills attacking seniority.
- Bills to defund education through charter schools and education savings accounts.
- The bill that would stop payroll deduction for association dues.
- The five bills directly affecting service personnel rights: substitute seniority, eight-hour work day, demotion at any time of the year, eliminating competency testing and elimination of overtime on weekends.

The 2018 Legislative session will end on March 10, 2018. The leadership and staff at WVSSPA will be at the Capitol every day to ensure the rights, pay and benefits of service personnel are protected. After this session the fight continues into the primary and general elections. We must remember in November!

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