



RESPONSE THE 2019 STATE OF THE STATE

West Virginia School Service Personnel Association

As Governor Justice started his address he stated that when he got his first set of books handed to him, the state was \$217 million short and the projections in future years the deficit would grow to over \$700 million. Governor Justice said there are no cuts in the 2019 budget- we have surpluses- no new taxes. An all-time record in the state's history. A surplus bigger than ever before in the first six months of the fiscal year we have \$185.9 million in surplus.

We would like to highlight some areas in the address that WVSSPA will be following closely.

Make education the centerpiece. Invest in education.

1. 5% pay increase for all state employees.
2. We can dedicate today \$150 million into PEIA
3. A challenge to review the state aide formula.
4. The ability to bank leave days
5. Promise scholarships to be able to go towards vocational schools.
6. Removing the income tax on social security.

While we believe that the topics here seem to be in our favor, any time we can receive an increase in salary and more funding into PEIA, we are very appreciative. We have believed for some time that the school aide formula is antiquated and we should never base our staffing on the number of students. We will be following this topic and working with the legislature on all of these issues. We are very interested to see how the legislature interprets the recommendations.

Governor Justice mentioned the Roads to prosperity and also mentioned the secondary roads and the need to fix them. However we are concerned that there is a huge vacancy in DOH positions. It is our hope that these positions are not in the 2000 job vacancies that he wants to eliminate.

There was not any mention of a raise or cost of living adjustment (COLA) for the retirees. This is something that has been asked for, for quite some time and is desperately needed.

We hope that this is a positive step in the right direction for the 2019 Legislative Session.

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