

## West Virginia Legislative Brief: Commentary from Gil White 3/9/18



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The 2018 teachers' strike in West Virginia reached an end on Tuesday, March 6, 2018. The strike was the longest in state history, lasting a total of 13 days – 2 days longer than the 1990 teachers' strike. The strike ended when the legislature passed, and the Governor signed, [HB 4145](#), which provided a 5% pay raise for teachers, school service personnel, and state troopers. A 5% pay raise for all other public employees will be provided in the budget bill. In addition, PEIA (WV Public Employee Insurance Agency) premiums and benefits remain frozen until July 1, 2019. and a task force of state employees and union representatives was created by Governor Justice to explore rising PEIA costs (see below).

Needless to say, this shutdown has absolutely affected the final days of the regular legislative session and many pending bills in committees failed to receive committee action in both chambers resulting in several bills dying.

On Thursday, Governor Justice announced the 23 members of the PEIA Task Force that will research and make recommendations for a permanent solution and fix to the health care plan for state employees.

Justice Administration Chief of Staff Mike Hall will chair the Task Force and has scheduled its first meeting for 2 p.m. Tuesday, March 13, 2018, in the Governor's Cabinet Conference Room at the State Capitol.

Members of the Task Force are as follows:

- Marty Becker, Chairman of the Board of Directors, QBE Insurance Group
- Greg Burton, CEO, Brickstreet Insurance
- Andy Paterno, CEO, Centurion Insurance Services
- Joe Letnaunchyn, President & CEO, West Virginia Hospital Association
- Rob Alsop, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, West Virginia University
- Nelson Spencer, McDowell County Schools Superintendent
- Perry Bryant, Executive Director, West Virginians for Affordable Healthcare
- Senator Mitch Carmichael (R-Jackson)
- Senator Robert Plymale (D-Cabell)
- Senator Craig Blair (R-Berkeley)
- Delegate Eric Nelson (R-Kanawha)
- Delegate Roger Hanshaw (R-Clay)
- Delegate Mick Bates (D-Raleigh)
- Geoff Christian, current member PEIA Board
- Christine Campbell, President, American Federation of Teachers West Virginia
- Dale Lee, President, West Virginia Education Association
- James "Joe" White, Executive Director, West Virginia School Service Personnel Association
- Dr. Rahul Gupta, Commissioner of Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Public Health and State Health Officer
- Douglas Kirk, Division of Highways
- Lieutenant Michael LaFauci, West Virginia State Police
- The Honorable Jeffrey Reed, Retired Wood County Circuit Court Judge
- Judy Hale, retired public educator

Finally, all indications are the Legislature will in fact conclude the 60-day session on time, tomorrow night at midnight, with a budget having passed both chambers and to the Governor for his approval. It is anticipated the Governor will sign this year's budget with no veto in sight.

## **Legislative Calendar - Important Days to Remember**

First Day - January 10

20th Day - January 28 - Submission of Legislative Rule-Making Review Bills due

35th Day - February 13 - Last day to introduce bills in the House

41st Day - February 19 - Last day to introduce bills in the Senate

47th Day - February 25 - Bills due out of committee in house of origin to ensure three full days for readings

50th Day - February 28 - Last day to consider bills on third reading in house of origin. Does not apply to the budget bill or supplemental appropriation bills.

60th Day - March 10 - Adjournment at midnight

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