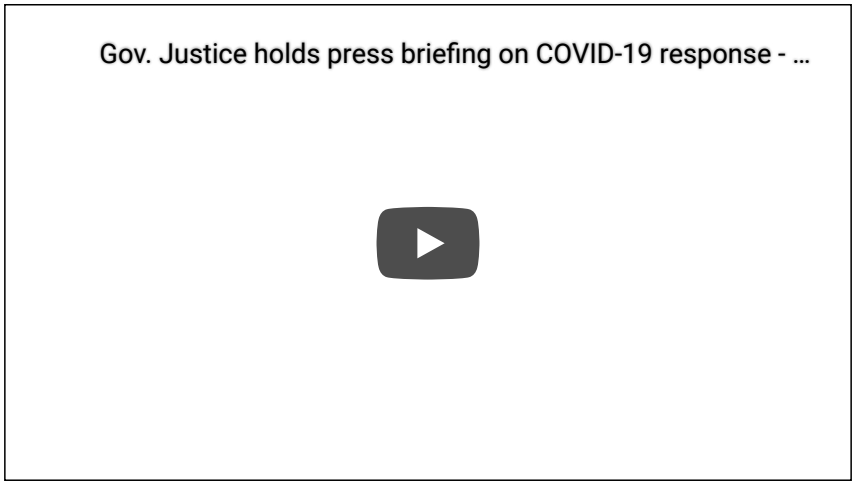
COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice extends statewide school closure, requests extension of state income tax filing deadline

3/25/2020



CHARLESTON, WV – Gov. Jim Justice joined State health leaders at the Capitol Complex in Charleston today for a virtual press briefing to once again update the public on the many measures being taken in the interest of protecting the public from the spread of novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157713623202551)

Click image to view more event photos (https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157713623202551)

STATEWIDE SCHOOL CLOSURES EXTENDED

During his address, Gov. Justice announced that he has instructed State Superintendent of Schools Clayton Burch to extend the ongoing closure of all schools statewide for at least three-and-a-half more weeks.

The Governor and education leaders are now hoping to resume in-class instruction on Monday, April 20, 2020.

"I am very, very hopeful that our kids are going to be able to go back to school at some point in time, but we're not there right now," Gov. Justice said. "We need to give our families proper time to be able to make arrangements.

"April 20th is a Monday, a week after Easter, and it would take spring break into consideration. I'm very hopeful that on April 20th we can go back to school, but we'll have to see, just like everything we've done."

Click here to read more details (https://wvde.us/school-closure-extended/)

EXTENSION OF STATE INCOME TAX FILING DEADLINE REQUESTED

Gov. Justice also announced that he has asked West Virginia Tax Commissioner Dale Steager to extend the West Virginia income tax filing and payment deadline until Wednesday, July 15, 2020, to correspond with the federal government's recent tax filing extension to the same date.

"We've been trying to fit these changes together and make it work," Gov. Justice said. "The main driver has to be, first and foremost, the convenience of our people.

"If you're going to do one filing, we surely don't need to ask you to do two different filings."

PROPERTY TAX INTEREST AND PENALTIES WAIVED THROUGH APRIL

During his address, the Governor also announced that he will be waiving all interest and penalties on property tax filings until Friday, May 1, 2020.

The West Virginia State Tax Department will be posting administrative notice of these changes on **their website** (https://tax.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx) tomorrow.

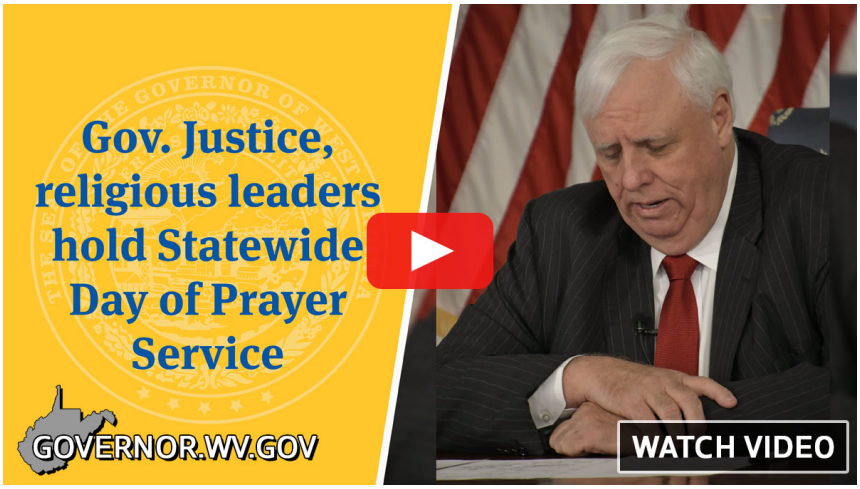
GOV. JUSTICE HOSTS DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE

Gov. Justice joined religious leaders from across West Virginia today to conduct a **virtual Statewide Day of Prayer Service** (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice,-religious-leaders-hold-Statewide-Day-of-Prayer-Service.aspx).

Leaders from many different religious backgrounds participated in the event to provide all West Virignians, no matter their religious denomination, an opportunity to pray as one people during the state's ongoing "Stay At Home" order.

"Today is a special day that we have dedicated to a Day of Prayer in West Virginia," Gov. Justice said during today's service. "I go to my God multiple times every day and I can tell you He'll lead us out of this, but today is a really special day for us all to come together."

Today's service was held virtually, with religious leaders participating through online video chat technology to ensure that social distancing practices, recommended by health experts across the country to combat the spread of COVID-19, are being followed. The service included several prayers and songs meant to bring hope to West Virginians through worship. The event was broadcast live online and on television stations across the state.



(/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice,-religious-leaders-hold-Statewide-Day-of-Prayer-Service.aspx)

DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS IMPLEMENTS PLAN TO CONTINUE PUBLIC SERVICE WHILE KEEPING WORKERS SAFE

Also today, the West Virginia Department of Transportation announced that leaders with their Division of Highways have recently implemented a plan which will allow continued public service for essential roadwork and emergency situations while reducing the number of workers present at one time in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Transportation workers have been divided into two groups and two-week time periods have been established. For each two-week time period, one group will telework from home, completing a rigorous training course. The other group will continue roadwork and emergency response, while taking precautions to avoid COVID-19 exposure. At the end of two weeks, the groups will switch.

Click here to read more details (https://transportation.wv.gov/communications/PressRelease/Pages/WVDOT-offers-COVID-19-guidance-for-DOH-transportation-workers-and-bridge-inspectors.aspx)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Gov. Justice continues to encourage all West Virginians to follow the **guidelines presented last week by President Donald J. Trump** (https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/03.16.20_coronavirus-guidance_8.5x11_315PM.pdf) to avoid social gatherings of more than 10 people.

For more information about COVID-19 prevention and more, call the State's toll-free hotline at **1-800-887-4304** or visit **Coronavirus.wv.gov** (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx).

Contact Information

Jordan Damron, jordan.l.damron@wv.gov