

OFFICE OF THE SENATE PRESIDENT
President Earl Ray Tomblin

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REMARKS DELIVERED BY PRES. EARL RAY TOMBLIN
GOVERNOR'S RECEPTION ROOM

Good morning.

As a result of Governor Manchin's successful election, we are now in the midst of a transition for our State. I know that all of you as citizens have questions about what will happen next.

Before we get into that, I want to publicly commend Governor Manchin on his victory and thank him for all he has done for our state. He has been a remarkable Governor. I know he will do us proud as our Senator.

Now, back to the transition process. Our Constitution and our laws contemplate a clear and organized transfer of power. The Constitution states that, when a vacancy arises in the office of governor, the senate president shall act as governor until the vacancy is filled. Throughout my tenure as Senate President, I have always been mindful of this responsibility.

As it became likely that Governor Manchin could join the United States Senate, I recognized that it was absolutely necessary to prepare for transition of the duties, responsibilities, and affairs of our great State in an orderly manner. It has been my honor, privilege and more importantly, my responsibility to prepare for this transition. I have spent countless days examining the work and tasks of the Governor's office. I have had the assistance of those who are currently in government along with others whose vantage point and understanding of government I respect and trust.

Assuming no recount or challenges to the election, it is expected that the secretary of state will certify the election shortly, and Governor Manchin will take his oath as a United States Senator sometime around November 15th.

Governor Manchin will resign prior to taking his Senate oath. When he does, it will be my honor and privilege to serve as Governor of the great state of West Virginia.

I will spend my time as Governor running the executive branch of government. I do not plan on presiding over or voting in the Senate. Our Senate rules contemplate that when the Senate President is unavailable, the President Pro Tempore presides over the senate.

A vacancy in the Office of Governor does not occur often, but long established and carefully contemplated rules govern this process. I am ready to get to work. We must continue to move our great State forward. We must all focus on putting West Virginia first.

The world in which we live is extremely competitive. The issues and needs that face West Virginia continue - and are far too important to be placed on hold.

I recognize that many people may be wondering when a new election for Governor will be held. I have been advised that our current laws – which have been on the books for over a century – clearly provide that the new election will occur in 2012. Legal experts agreed on this point unanimously before a legislative committee studying this subject only a few weeks ago.

I am well aware of the strong desires of some wishing to have an election prior to 2012. For me, it comes down to what the people want. If my fellow West Virginians express an overwhelming desire to have a quick election, I will work with the Legislature to make that a reality. We must, however, take a reasoned and thoughtful approach to our decision-making process. We must keep in mind the potential costs, timing, and what is in the best interests of West Virginia.

Unlike many of our neighboring states, West Virginia has enjoyed stability during these difficult times. As Governor, I will focus on maintaining a stable West Virginia. I will lead with a renewed passion to continue to move this State forward.

Twenty-five years ago, when I became Senate Finance chairman, the State was on the verge of default and bankruptcy. Since that time, I've worked with

legislative members and four different governors to help bring us back to the financial stability that now makes West Virginia envied nationally. We have paid down our debt. We have balanced our budget. We have lowered taxes. And the fruits of our labor have not gone unnoticed. For example, the bond rating agencies have recently upgraded our ratings. This has resulted and will continue to result in millions of dollars of savings for taxpayers. This is something we can all be proud of.

We must continue to improve our education system. Our children depend on us for a competitive, world-class education - they cannot afford to be let down.

We are an energy leader. Coal is a huge part of West Virginia. And we must continue to support its important role in the energy needs of our nation. We need to foster policies where we appropriately balance the interests of protecting our environment while extracting the energy resources so desperately needed by our country. West Virginia is blessed with an abundance of energy resources including coal, oil, natural gas, as well as wind or solar power. And we must continue to take advantage of those resources and make West Virginia stronger.

West Virginia is a tremendous state with an even greater potential. Her horizon looks bright and her people are poised for success. I look forward to the coming days and weeks as we create a smooth transition to continue to take care of the business of our great State and as we all pull together to put West Virginia first.

Again, thank you for being here. I am happy to answer your questions.

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