

State of West Virginia
Joe Manchin III
Governor

Office of the Governor
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March 20, 2008

VIA HAND DELIVERY

The Honorable Betty Ireland
Secretary of State
State Capitol
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear Secretary Ireland:

Pursuant to the provisions of Section Fourteen, Article VII of the Constitution of West Virginia, I hereby disapprove and veto Enrolled Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 477.

Enrolled Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 477 relates to the compensation of Conservation Officers. Specifically, the Bill provides for a base pay increase, a hiring bonus, and an increase in incremental pay. Although I support the intent of the Bill, I must object to this legislation.

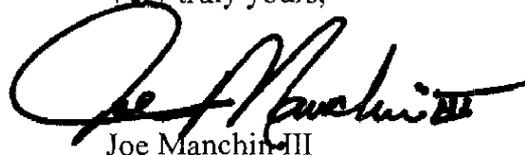
At the outset, I acknowledge the hard work and dedication of this State's Conservation Officers. Conservation Officers are the backbone of the Division of Natural Resources, and their contributions to the public welfare cannot be overstated. Nevertheless, I cannot approve this Bill at this time. I have repeatedly stated that public salaries must be evaluated on a comprehensive basis within the context of all public employees. Addressing public salaries in this manner offers a deeper perspective of the State's financial standing and ensures that public employees are treated fairly. To that end, I requested – and the Legislature approved – a three percent salary increase for all state employees, Conservation Officers included, in the State Budget for the fiscal year 2009.

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For this reason, I must veto Enrolled Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 477.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Joe Manchin III
Governor

cc: The Honorable Earl Ray Tomblin
President, Senate of West Virginia
The Honorable Richard Thompson
Speaker, House of Delegates