



Jim Justice
Governor of West Virginia

March 30, 2022

VIA HAND DELIVERY

The Honorable Mac Warner
Secretary of State
State Capitol Complex
Building 1, Suite 157-K
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Re: Enrolled House Bill 4020

Dear Secretary Warner:

Pursuant to the provisions of Section Fourteen, Article VII of the Constitution of the State of West Virginia, I hereby disapprove and return Enrolled House Bill 4020. The Department of Health and Human Resources (the "DHHR") works diligently every day to support the health and safety of all West Virginians across our State. There have been issues, however, within the DHHR for decades, and some of those issues are likely the result of the sheer size and diverse scope of the agency. While I certainly understand the motivation of this legislation, Enrolled House Bill 4020 as presented to me does not fully accomplish the expressed intent.

First, the bill was introduced to address the expansive size and scope of the DHHR. The statutory provisions relevant to the DHHR span many sections across various chapters and articles of the West Virginia Code. The bill intends in just eight pages and by amending just two sections of Code, however, to divide this complex organization that manages over \$7 billion dollars of State and Federal funds and employs thousands of individuals across the State. The bill as presented does not provide adequate direction on the many questions that must be addressed in this massive endeavor, including important questions regarding how the federal funds will flow to ensure we don't jeopardize significant federal funding. This bill also purports to divide the DHHR into two new agencies, effective January 1, 2023. Budgetary changes, however, may not be made effective until July 1, 2023, under the bill. It is unclear how the different effective dates could work in concert.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

For the above reasons, I must disapprove and return Enrolled House Bill 4020. I am committed, however, to address and correct the very real issues within DHHR. I am engaging national experts and industry leaders to coordinate and complete a top-to-bottom review of DHHR so that we may clearly identify the issues, bottlenecks, and inefficiencies in the agency in its current form. We will work to develop a plan to address any and all problems identified in an efficient and effective way—which may very well require a full reorganization of the agency—that will best serve the people of the State of West Virginia without any lapse in vital support or services. I look forward to working with the Legislature and interested parties in developing and implementing that plan.

Sincerely,



Jim Justice
Governor

cc: The Honorable Craig Blair
President of the Senate

The Honorable Roger Hanshaw
Speaker of the House of Delegates