

The Senate of West Virginia  
Charleston



RYAN W. WELD  
MAJORITY WHIP  
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December 19, 2022

Governor Jim Justice  
State of West Virginia  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, E  
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Governor Justice,

I am writing to you today asking you, pursuant to your powers as Chief Executive set forth in Article V of the Constitution of West Virginia and the laws of this State, to issue an executive order banning the download or use of TikTok, WeChat, or any other applications developed by ByteDance Limited or Tencent Holdings Limited on any government-issued devices, including all state-issued cell phones, laptops, or other devices.

As a former Air Force intelligence officer, I am all too familiar with the significant threats this nation faces from cyberattacks and how sensitive personal and government information is gained through them. I am also acutely aware of the fact that many of the individuals and organizations behind these types of attacks are located within the People's Republic of China – acting either in an official government or military capacity, or as state-sanctioned third parties.

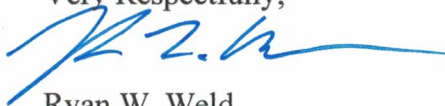
TikTok and WeChat, however popular they may be in the United States, are owned by the Chinese tech companies ByteDance Limited and Tencent Holdings Limited, respectively. Under Chinese law, the Communist government has the legal authority to compel these companies to provide it with data they already collect or may be able to collect through their applications. Having these applications on our government-issued devices presents the all too real potential for the Chinese government to gain access to the information stored on these devices, including personal information, sensitive government data, location services, and browsing history.

While this may seem a trivial issue to some, I assure you that it is not. To date, at least 16 states and several federal agencies, including the Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security, have enacted measures prohibiting the downloading or use of these apps on

government devices or accessing them through government networks. I respectfully ask that West Virginia to do the same.

I greatly appreciate your consideration of this issue. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. W. Weld", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ryan W. Weld  
Majority Whip