

*Joe Manchin III*  
WEST VIRGINIA



*United States Senate*  
WASHINGTON, DC

## **GREETING FROM JOE MANCHIN III UNITED STATES SENATOR**

On behalf of the citizens of the Mountain State, and as your United States Senator, it is my honor to welcome those attending the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Gene Vance, Jr. Day and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gene Vance Jr. Foundation.

As we come together today, let us not forget the sacrifices made by the men and women who have come before us, the great people who have served our nation so bravely. Particularly now, as we honor the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of 9/11, I thank the veterans and their family members in attendance today for the sacrifices they have made to preserve the freedoms we hold dear. Today's ceremony shows that our entire nation grieves at the loss of a service member, and that their service is truly never forgotten.

Sgt. Vance served our nation honorably, but his life was tragically cut short on May 18, 2002 in the mountains of Afghanistan. His training with the U.S. Special Forces and his expertise as a skilled linguist saved the lives of two of his fellow American soldiers, along with 18 Afghani soldiers during Operation Enduring Freedom. The sudden loss of any one life is one life too many. When those lives are lost in battle, fighting for their nation, it is with great appreciation that they are memorialized as daily reminders of the brave men and women who loved our country so dearly. Sgt. Gene Arden Vance Jr. was such a man, and I proudly join each of you paying tribute to his legacy, and that of all the heroes of the Global War on Terror.

Again, I extend my congratulations and thanks to the Gene Vance Jr. Foundation as we celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of supporting our nation's heroes. I sincerely thank the West Virginia Army National Guard, the City of Morgantown, the Gene Vance Jr. Foundation for the Catastrophically Injured, and all those who contributed to making this special event possible to honor and support our service members.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Joe Manchin III".

Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator