



The Honorable
Donna A. Frett-Gregory
Liaison to Congress

Legislature of the Virgin Islands

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CHAIRPERSON
Committee on Budget, Appropriations
and Finance

VICE CHAIRPERSON
Committee on Education
and Workforce Development

MEMBER
Committee on Economic Development
& Agriculture

Committee on Health, Hospitals and
Human Services

Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance May 9, 2023 Report

The Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance convened at 10:11 a.m.

Committee Members Attendance:

Senator Marvin A. Blyden
Senator Samuel Carrion
Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff
Senator Ray Fonseca
Senator Donna A Frett-Gregory
Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr.
Senator Javan E. James, Sr.

Absent:

None

Excused:

None

Non-Members Attendance:

Senator Diane T. Capehart
Senator Milton E. Potter
Senator Alma Francis Heyliger
Senator Carla J. Joseph

BLOCK I – 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Update on the status of the premium pay distributions and the American Rescue Plan Act \$500 Stipends to Social Security Recipients.

Testifiers Present:

Honorable Jenifer O'Neal
Director – V.I. Office of Management and Budget

Ms. Monique Ferrell

Deputy Director - V.I. Office of Management and Budget

Ms. Jasnique Allen

Analyst - V.I. Office of Management and Budget

Mr. Roberto Tirado

GVI Fellow - V.I. Office of Management and Budget

Action:

No Action was taken. Senators received testimony and asked questions about the Premium pay and the American Rescue Plan Act stipends for the social security recipients.

The Office of Management and Budget will be finalizing plans on the distribution of the payments to seniors so that they will not have to be exposed to the elements and devise a plan to address those seniors who cannot utilize or have access to technology. The plan will be finalized by month's end.

BLOCK II – 11:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Update on the status of the Compliance Agreement between the U.S. Virgin Islands and the U.S. Department of Education as a result of the U.S. Virgin Islands being designated a “high-risk grantee” under 34 CFR § 80.12.

Testifiers Present:

Honorable Dionne Wells-Hedrington

Commissioner - V.I. Department of Education

Honorable Jenifer O’Neal

Director - V.I. Office of Management and Budget

Ms. Denelle Baptiste

Assistant Commissioner - V.I. Department of Human Services

Ms. Lisa Alejandro

Acting Commissioner - V.I. Department of Property and Procurement

*Ms. Nicole Craigwell Syms PHD
Assistant Commissioner - V.I. Department of Health*

*Ms. Sharon Murphy
Partner - McConnell & Jones, LLP*

*Ms. April Henry
Department of Education*

*Mr. Kimo Smith
Deputy Commissioner - Department of Education*

*Ms. Nyby Douglas
Senior Federal Grants Specialist - VI Office of Management and Budget*

*Mr. Melvin Waits
Project Director - McConnell & Jones, LLP*

Action:

No Action was taken. Senators received updates on the status of the Compliance Agreement between the U.S. Virgin Islands and the U.S. Department of Education as a result of the U.S. Virgin Islands being designated a “high-risk grantee” under 34 CFR § 80.12.

There are nine outstanding issues remaining to be resolved under the Compliance Agreement. A follow-up hearing will be held in 6 months to ascertain the status of resolving the outstanding matters.

BLOCK III – 1:45 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Bill No. 35-0012 - An Act amending title 23 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 19, subchapter III, section 1556 relating to the retirement from the National Guard to increase the retirement pension. (Sponsored by: Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff)

Testifiers Present:

*Major General Kodjo S. Knox-Limbacker
Adjutant General - V.I. National Guard*

Honorable Jenifer O'Neal

Director

V.I. Office of Management and Budget

Action:

A voice amendment was made by Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr. and seconded by Senators Ray Fonseca, Marvin A. Blyden and Samuel Carrion to increase the Retirement Pension for the National Guard from \$100 to \$300. There was no objection to the motion, and it was So Ordered.

A motion was made by Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff and seconded by Senators Novelle E. Francis, Jr., Ray Fonseca, Javan E. James Sr., and Marvin A. Blyden to forward Bill 35-0012 as amended to the Committee on Rules and Judiciary for further consideration. The motion passed with 7 yeas.

The Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Submitted by: Christina Colbourne-Miller

Clerks: Alinda Sebastian and Shirley Fahie