

Gittens, Blyden and Carrion Voice Concern Over Government Corruption and Recovery Delays

Senators Gittens, Blyden, and Carrion urge immediate reforms and federal oversight in response to escalating corruption allegations, emphasizing the urgency of ethical governance and robust hurricane recovery efforts in the territory

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In light of recent federal arrests and ongoing investigations into high-ranking local officials, Senators Kenneth Gittens, Marvin Blyden, and Samuel Carrion have expressed deep concern and called for immediate action to address corruption and improve hurricane recovery efforts.

Senator Kenneth Gittens highlighted his frustrations over the lack of transparency and cooperation in obtaining government contracts and grant documentation. He stated, "While we must await

further information and not rush to judgment, I am deeply saddened, dismayed, and outraged by the recent announcements of arrests and investigations of local government officials." Gittens, a career law enforcement officer, emphasized the need for accountability and rigorous policing within the government.

In his statement, Gittens mentioned his unsuccessful attempts to acquire essential documents from several departments, including the Water and Power Authority (WAPA) and the Department of Education. This lack of cooperation has fueled his suspicions and concerns about a burgeoning culture of lawlessness. Mr. Gittens is also advocating for the funding of the Office of the Inspector General and the establishment of an Ethics & Conflict of Interest Commission, a measure for which he is the primary sponsor.

Senator Marvin Blyden, Senate Vice-President and Chairman of the Committee on Housing, Transportation & Telecommunications, echoed Mr. Gittens's sentiments. Mr. Blyden expressed his outrage over the implications of recent corruption revelations, stating, "The events of the last couple of days...make me angry and embarrassed as a Virgin Islander." He stressed the importance of establishing safeguards to ensure transparency and efficiency in government operations. Mr. Blyden also highlighted the real-life consequences of misappropriated funds, which affect homeowners awaiting reconstruction post-Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and other citizens reliant on government services.

Senator Samuel Carrion expressed his dismay at the slow pace of hurricane recovery, attributing it to the personal agendas of those now under scrutiny. "It is very disconcerting to know that there were individuals pursuing personal agendas when they were entrusted to carry out critical duties on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands," Mr. Carrion stated. He called for enhanced federal involvement to ensure that recovery funds are used effectively, particularly in supporting the territory's struggling power infrastructure.