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Bryan Vetoes Wire Transfer Fee and Epstein Settlement Bills, Approves Budget Measures

Governor Bryan vetoes two prominent bills, rejecting a proposed 3% wire transfer fee and the Epstein settlement fund allocation. He also signed key budget measures for FY 2025, while urging legislative revisions on several other initiatives

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Governor Albert Bryan Jr. has vetoed two controversial bills passed by the 35th Legislature, including legislation that proposed a 3% wire transfer fee and another concerning the allocation of funds from the Jeffrey Epstein estate settlement.

The first bill, Bill No. 35-0375, sought to impose a 3% fee on money transfers as a means to establish the Money Laundering and Electronic Transaction Enforcement Fund. Governor Bryan,

however, vetoed this measure, citing its potential negative impact on residents and concerns over its practical implementation. The matter garnered negative feedback from the community following [an article published on the Consortium](#), leading Governor Bryan to [seek community feedback](#) before making a decision.

The second vetoed bill, Bill No. 35-0380, [aimed to appropriate funds from the settlement between the Government of the Virgin Islands and the estate of Jeffrey Epstein](#), as well as a separate settlement with Leon Black. The proposed allocation of these funds was intended to support community services, mental health resources, infrastructure projects, and economic development initiatives across the territory. Governor Bryan rejected the bill, calling it “unnecessary and flawed.”

Additionally, Governor Bryan vetoed Bill No. 35-0379, which included various amendments to the Virgin Islands Code and adjustments to several previously passed Acts. The governor referred to this legislation as “a staggering overreach,” stating that it attempted to terminate a legally binding agreement, an action that he deemed inappropriate for the Legislature to undertake.

Beyond these high-profile vetoes, Governor Bryan also addressed several budget bills for Fiscal Year 2025, approving a range of measures while rejecting others. Among those vetoed were Budget Bill Nos. 35-0375, 35-0379, 35-0380, and 35-0381. In contrast, a number of budget-related bills were signed into law, including those focused on the general fiscal management of the territory and appropriations for various government initiatives.

In addition to the vetoes, Governor Bryan acknowledged the Legislature's approval of nominations, including Gordon C. Rhea, Esq. as the Attorney General, and Vance E. Pinney and Calford S. Martin as members of the Virgin Islands Coastal Zone Management Commission. The governor also praised the confirmation of Calford S. Martin to the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority Board of Directors and Julian Penn to the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission.

Mr. Bryan also acted on a wide range of other bills passed during the September 27 session of the Legislature, addressing issues from zoning measures to public health initiatives. One notable approval was Bill No. 35-0272 sponsored by Senator Angel Bolques, which amended Virgin Islands Code to increase the motor vehicle rental surcharge, a move expected to generate additional revenue for the territory.

While many of the budget bills were signed into law, Governor Bryan vetoed Bill No. 35-0381, which proposed appropriating funds to the Attorney General’s Crime Prevention/Prosecution Fund. The governor explained that the measure was unnecessary and should be revised before further consideration.

Governor Bryan also rejected Bill No. 35-0087, which would have established a special fund in the Treasury of the Virgin Islands for the Veterans Mainland Travel Revolving Fund. In his transmittal letter to Senate President Nouvelle E. Francis Jr., Governor Bryan explained that the Office of Veterans Affairs was not consulted during the development of the bill, and he requested further collaboration before the bill could be revised and enacted.

Governor Bryan approved a series of zoning initiatives and a bill approving the conveyance of land in St. Croix to the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority. Another notable approval was Bill No. 35-0339, which extended agreements for group medical and dental insurance with Cigna and United Healthcare for government employees. However, Governor Bryan expressed disappointment in the Legislature’s decision to continue covering the full increase in insurance premiums each year, calling for a more sustainable approach.

