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Frett-Gregory Criticizes Public Officials Compensation Process, Citing Lack of Transparency

The senator called out the Public Officials Compensation Commission and Governor Bryan for failing to submit the report in time for legislative review, emphasizing that unresolved issues like retroactive payments further exacerbate public distrust

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Senator Donna Frett-Gregory. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

Senator Donna Frett-Gregory, Chair of the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance, on Monday afternoon voiced concerns regarding the recent [implementation of the Public Officials Compensation Study Report](#). The senator criticized the lack of transparency and accountability in the process, stressing that the Legislature had not received the report in time for review or action.

According to Frett-Gregory, the Public Officials Compensation Commission failed to notify the Legislature or the public about the completion of its study. She stated that her committee was unaware of the report's finalization and did not receive a copy of the document until Sunday.

“The legislative intent of the Public Official Compensation Commission was to provide transparency to the people of the Virgin Islands while contemplating salary adjustments for public officials,” Frett-Gregory said. She criticized the report's transmission via email, explaining that such actions typically require a formal hard copy submission to the Legislature for review.

She also took issue with Governor Albert Bryan Jr.'s statement that the proposed salary adjustments automatically became effective due to legislative inaction. She argued that it was disingenuous to expect action on a measure that had not been formally submitted to the Legislature.

Frett-Gregory noted that the governor's financial team appeared before her committee on September 3, 2024, to discuss the FY2025 Executive Budget and make additional financial requests. However, she said that salary adjustments for public officials were not part of those discussions.

The senator highlighted what she sees as a broader issue of selective legislative enactment. She pointed to other outstanding matters, such as retroactive payments for government retirees and workers, and the unaudited FY2024 government revenue and expenditure report required under Act No. 8915, which was due on December 15, 2024, but had not been submitted.

“There is no debate that the amounts in the Public Officials Compensation Study Report are small in the grand scheme of a billion-dollar budget,” Frett-Gregory stated. “However, it is important to bring light and discussion to this matter, particularly due to its lateness.”

Frett-Gregory concluded by stressing the importance of transparency and accountability in managing government finances, calling on leaders to prioritize restoring public trust. “The Chief Executive's position, while our constituents continue to seek answers on financial matters, exacerbates the community's distrust in our government,” she said. “We must do better.”