

## Bryan Calls for 'Expenses Conference' to Uncover True Cost of Running Government

At the 2025 Spring Revenue Estimating Conference, Governor Bryan urged transparency in public spending, citing underfunded services, rising Medicaid costs, VIPD overtime, and inflation's impact on stagnant fees and taxes.

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“One of the things that I've always thought we should have is a true estimate of what it costs to run this government,” said Governor Albert Bryan Jr., speaking at the 2025 Spring Revenue Estimating Conference, held Friday.

“Revenue conferences are great, right? But I think what we should have is an expenses conference,” the governor declared, saying that a true picture of government expenditure is not

being painted. “Every year we discount the retro pay that we owe,” he noted. “We discount the underfunded waste management costs. We discount the underfunded hospitals costs,” Governor Bryan continued. “We have a rising matching priority in terms of the Medicaid that we get...we're running out of the money faster. We're giving more services. We discount the cost of VITRAN – the real cost, we kind of like sweep it under the rug.”

The governor also pointed to the millions in overtime paid to officers of the VIPD – “it can be controlled, but it will never be eliminated,” he noted. “We really have to look at what we're doing in the government.”

Despite making “a tremendous effort to make sure that our people don't suffer from inflation as bad as they have,” rising consumer costs, “as high as 14% in a single year,” according to Governor Bryan, have still had a huge impact. With fees and taxes largely unchanged in the past seven years, inflation has eaten away at the value of the annual revenues collected.

“When you look at it in perspective, we're way undercharging everybody,” Governor Bryan declared, noting that the most costly license in the USVI is \$1400, while one proposed marine charter operator license fee in the BVI is \$24,000 annually.

“Not that I'm saying we should increase costs,” the governor demurred, “but it's something we really have to look at.”