

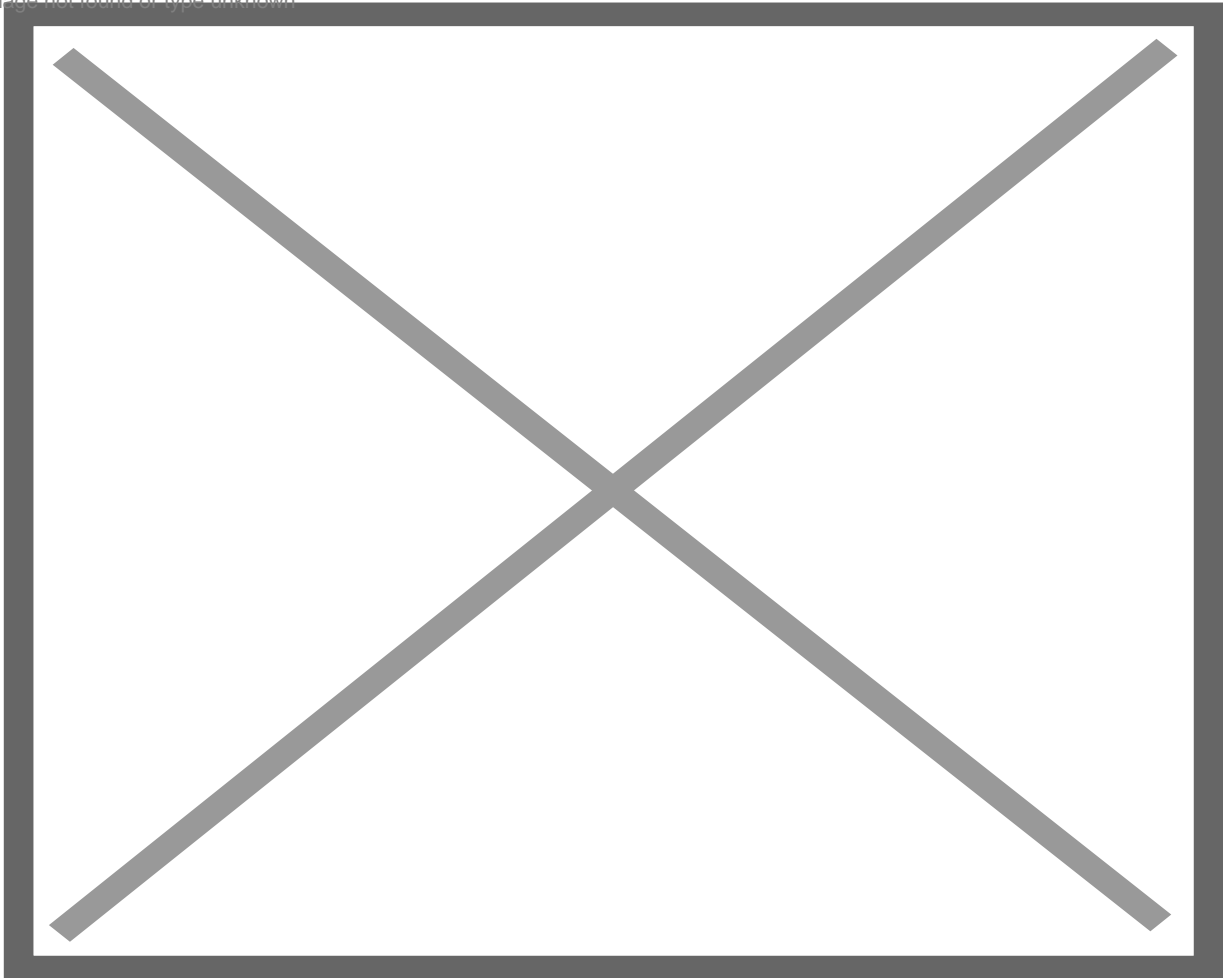
Roach Urges Bryan to Rescind Pay Raises Following Public Outcry and Davies Appointment

Amid backlash over salary hikes, Roach says Davies's appointment to head the Bureau of Economic Research compromises the Compensation Commission's impartiality and makes the raises appear to be part of a quid pro quo arrangement.

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L2R: Governor Albert Bryan Jr. and Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach met with members of 35th Legislature Majority Caucus in June 2023. By. GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach announced on Tuesday that he has written to Governor Albert Bryan, Jr. asking for the wage increases granted to him and to the Governor by the Virgin Islands Public Officials Compensation Commission to be rescinded. Roach says that although he

has made no criticism of the work of the Commission, the appointment of its Chair to a high-level Cabinet position has tainted the work of the Commission and now raises questions about its impartiality.

According to the release, Mr. Roach who has just returned from a United Nations sponsored trip to the Pacific, said he learned of Dr. [Haldane Davies's appointment](#) while there through the media and was never consulted by the governor about his decision to appoint Davies to head the Bureau of Economic Research. Such an appointment, the lieutenant governor said, taints the work of the Commission and raises questions about the integrity of its recommendations.

The letter comes amid swift community pushback following several Consortium [articles](#) on the salary increases, with the backlash proving particularly costly for Roach, who may be weighing a run for governor.

Roach said he wants to make it clear that he supported the legislation creating the Compensation Commission because he believed that it was an acceptable means of removing the authority from the legislative and executive branches to determine their own salaries. The Commission, whose membership consists of private and public sector representatives and human resources professionals, is charged with determining salaries for specific public officials.

“As far as I was concerned, the Commission did the task that was before it without any interference from either you or me. In fact, I had only one single interaction with the Commission after it was formed which was via a Zoom meeting in which the members essentially interviewed me about the job of Lieutenant Governor,” Roach said in his letter to Bryan.

He added, “They deemed that a necessary step because the job of lieutenant governor differs greatly from state to state. As an example, the Lieutenant Governor of Rhode Island has four employees under her command while I started in 2019 with almost 145 positions, spread over 9 locations on three islands. Other lieutenant governors have no statutory responsibilities and do essentially only the work that their Governor assigns to them.

“Therefore, because I had no issue with the process, I felt the wage increases were appropriate and would clear the way for higher salaries in the executive branch, and eventually, all branches of Government. We both know that our ability to attract and keep the best talent has been compromised by the relatively low salaries that we are able to offer here.”

According to the release, Roach told the governor that he is extremely dismayed by the appointment of Dr. Davies, the Compensation Commission's Chair, to head the Bureau of Economic Research. “Had you and I consulted about this appointment, I would not have agreed to such a move, as it taints the work of the Commission and now makes the wage increases appear an instance of quid pro quo—wage increase for job appointment,” he wrote.

He concluded, “Thus, although I have before consented to the wage increases, I am afraid that this circumstance makes me now unwilling and unable to accept an increase in my salary. In fact, I am asking you to take the necessary steps now to rescind the wage increases and restore our salaries to the previous levels. I believe that implementing these raises will further erode the public trust in Government, and while trust lost may not necessarily be restored by the rescission of the wage increases, I believe it a step in the right direction.”