

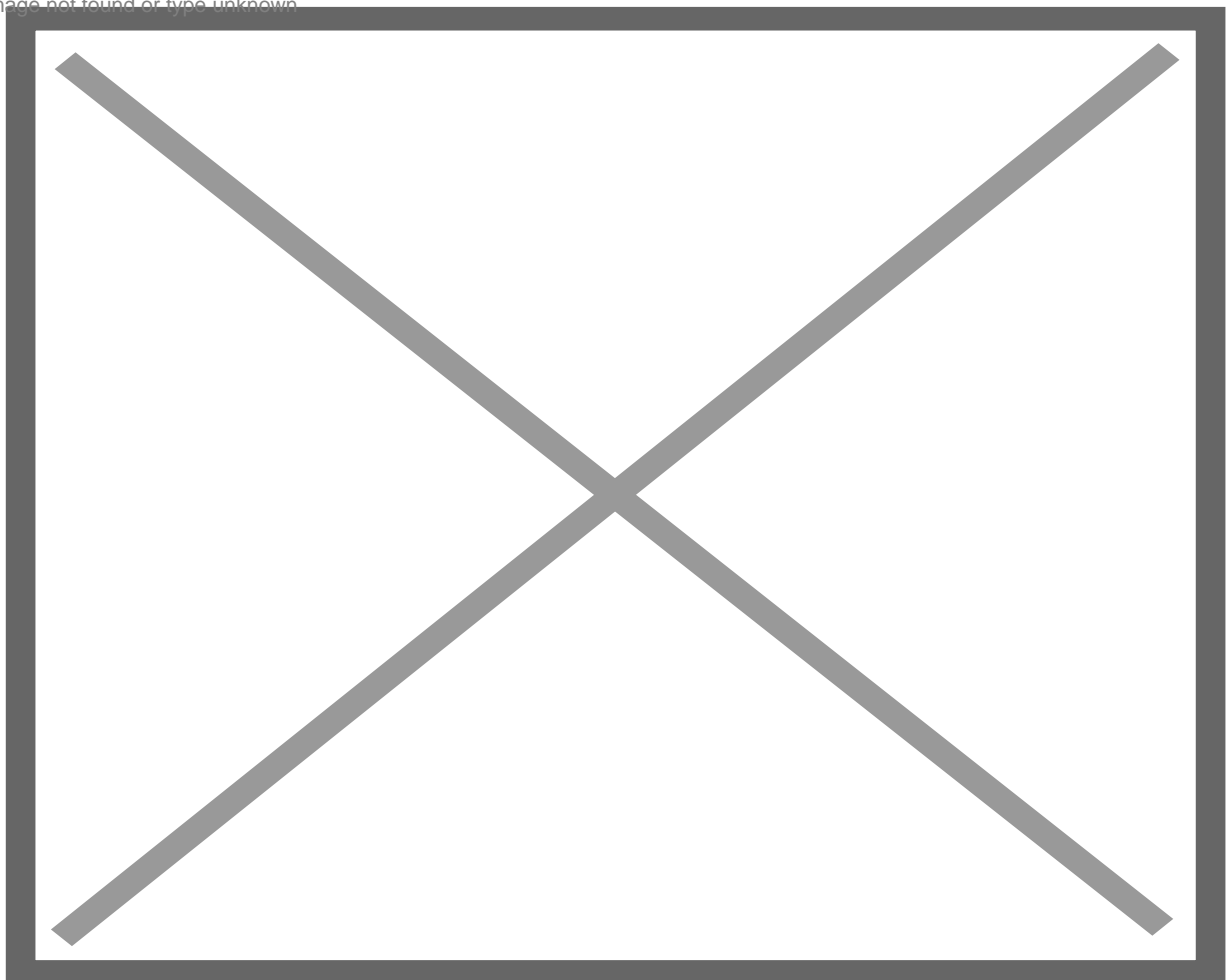
When the Clock Pays Better Than the Corner Office

FY2024 payroll records reveal overtime propelled dozens of rank-and-file employees past the brand-new \$192 000 gubernatorial salary, even as lawmakers protest raises for the territory's leaders and shortfalls at hospitals and other core services.

Government / **Published On May 29, 2025 07:24 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **May 29, 2025**

Image not found or type unknown



The Virgin Islands government's latest payroll disclosures and a fresh round of executive pay hikes have converged into a perfect political storm—one that pits statutory salaries against overtime-inflated earnings and ignites questions about fiscal priorities.

An FY2024 [payroll spreadsheet](#) obtained by The Consortium shows a public-safety technician topping the earnings chart with \$335,580.79 in total wages—just \$3,637.42 recorded as base pay and a staggering \$329,220.47 logged as overtime and other differentials. With employer-paid benefits added, the government's total cost for this single position climbs to \$414,342.99. Nine

additional employees ended the year between \$260,000 and \$305,000, each buoyed by six-figure premium-pay lines.

Those windfalls dwarf the \$150,000 total shown for Governor Albert Bryan Jr. in the same dataset and the \$125,000 drawn by Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach. Yet the ledger is already outdated: a VIPOCC-recommended adjustment—which took effect quietly in late January—has since [lifted](#) the governor’s salary to \$192,000 and the lieutenant governor’s to \$168,000.

News that the raises along with retroactive checks had taken effect landed badly in the Legislature, where appropriators are still scrambling to route dollars to the territory’s cash-strapped hospitals and other essential services. However, it was the V.I. Legislature’s [failure to take appropriate action](#) within the 90-day review window of the VIPOCC’s report that led to the automatic raises not only for the governor and lieutenant governor, but at least [twelve other cabinet members](#). Even so, lawmakers grilled agency heads on Friday over unmet obligations and blasted the timing as “tone-deaf.”

The overtime vortex inside VIPD

The fire was already burning. During budget testimony in [July 2024](#), Police Commissioner Mario Brooks conceded that the V.I. Police Department had spent \$18 million on overtime by July 11, 2024—more than double its \$8 million allotment. Vacant-position funds were raided to plug the gap, and senators learned of lieutenants and sergeants who more than doubled their base pay—one St. Croix sergeant surged from \$82,000 in salary to \$202,000 year-to-date.

“This is a total runaway train, and the abuse is being allowed to happen,” Senator Kenneth Gittens warned, urging management to curb 12-hour shifts and install automated scheduling.

The VIPD says scheduling software is on order, but critics argue that without hard overtime caps—and the staff to cover regular shifts—premium hours will keep cannibalizing the budget.

Even after the new salaries take effect, the governor and lieutenant governor remain well below the top earners driven by overtime and differential pay. Dozens of police officers, corrections staff, and health-care professionals will still collect more than \$192,000 if overtime patterns hold. But the government pay hierarchy is of little importance to Virgin Islanders struggling to make ends meet while dealing with dilapidated infrastructure, subpar healthcare services, high cost of living and stagnant wages. Residents are adamant that concrete, measurable upgrades to everyday life—affordable living costs, reliable healthcare, and sound infrastructure—must come before officials even consider salary increases.

Kevin Industrious, a regular voice on the V.I. Consortium’s Facebook page, [says](#) “the law clearly defines the process,” yet the Legislature “dropped the ball, a customary practice,” calling its inaction during today’s financial shortfalls “a total disservice to the people of the Virgin Islands.” He urges voters—“the ones [who] stand to be affected”—to reject the “friend, friend, fish fry, popularity mentality” at the next election. Although Industrious concedes that “the Governor is standing on the law,” he argues that, “in good conscience, there is a public outcry ... based on facts, the failing state of the territory/economy.” A leader, he maintains, should “listen to his constituents and find common ground.”

