

V.I. Department of Justice Files Emergency Motion to Halt Parole Hearings, Citing Constitutional Concerns

Motion seeks immediate stay on parole proceedings and challenges recent legislation as overstepping judicial and executive authority

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The V.I. Department of Justice has submitted an emergency motion to the V.I. Superior Court seeking to suspend upcoming parole hearings and requesting judicial review of a newly enacted law that the department argues violates the territory's constitutional framework.

Filed ahead of a series of parole hearings [scheduled to begin on June 2, 2025](#), the department's motion asks for a temporary restraining order to halt all proceedings while the court evaluates the legality of the statute in question. According to the V.I. DOJ, the legislation, passed by the V.I. Legislature, would permit individuals who were previously ineligible for parole—based on court-imposed sentences—to now apply for early release.

The department contends that this retroactive shift unlawfully alters final judicial decisions, encroaching upon the separation of powers by interfering with both the authority of the courts and the governor. “The Department of Justice has a duty to uphold the Constitution and protect the integrity of our legal system,” said Chief Deputy Attorney General Ian Clement. “This legislation improperly empowers the Legislature to interfere with final sentencing orders issued by the courts and strips the Governor of his established authority over parole decisions.”

Beyond the constitutional arguments, the V.I. DOJ also raised administrative concerns. The Virgin Islands Parole Board, it says, currently lacks a legal quorum and is therefore not in a position to conduct valid hearings or issue lawful decisions. Moving forward with the hearings under such circumstances, the department asserts, would not only violate legal procedure but also undermine public confidence in the justice system.

The emergency motion seeks to have all scheduled parole hearings paused until the court can resolve the legal issues raised. The Superior Court is expected to review the motion on an expedited basis in light of the rapidly approaching hearing dates.

The V.I. DOJ said that its action is driven by a need to preserve the rule of law and to ensure that any parole decisions are made within the bounds of the Constitution and established statutory authority.