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USVI Governor and Lieutenant Governor Now Rank Among Top-Paid in U.S., Far Outpacing Puerto Rico as Pay Raises Spark Outcry

Bryan and Roach now rank among top-paid U.S. governors after their pay rocketed up the national ladder—far outpacing Puerto Rico’s \$70,000 governor salary. Lawmakers meet June 4 to consider reversing the raises amid backlash.

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A cartoon showing USVI leaders displaying top-ranked salaries, while a map highlights Puerto Rico’s stagnant pay—spotlighting growing local outrage. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

The Virgin Islands governor and lieutenant governor now rank among the highest-paid chief executives in the United States, following the implementation of salary increases recommended by

the V.I. Public Officials Compensation Commission (VIPOCC). Governor Albert Bryan Jr.'s salary rose from \$150,000 to \$192,000, while Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach now earns \$168,000—placing them 10th and 5th nationwide, respectively, among their counterparts.

The raises, which took effect quietly on December 2, 2024, triggered public uproar particularly in the wake of ongoing issues with healthcare, energy costs and infrastructure among other deficiencies. Lawmakers in the 36th Legislature are now scheduled to convene a formal session on June 4 to consider legislation aimed at rescinding the salary hikes, which were implemented automatically due to the [Legislature's failure](#) to act within a 90-day review window as outlined in VIPOCC's enabling statute.

Governor Bryan's new annual compensation of \$192,000 surpasses the salaries of 41 out of 50 U.S. state governors and every other territorial chief executive except the USVI itself. In stark contrast, Puerto Rico's governor earns \$70,000—a figure unchanged since 1989. The lieutenant governor's salary of \$168,000 trails only those of New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, and far exceeds the national average of approximately \$118,000 for the position.

Unlike Puerto Rico, which has no official lieutenant governor position, the USVI maintains both roles with full-time statutory salaries. The discrepancy in pay between the two neighboring territories—just 30 minutes apart by air—has further fueled debate about fiscal responsibility, transparency, and public service ethos in the Virgin Islands.

Below is a 50-state + 5-territory snapshot of every U.S. governor's statutory salary alongside the latest 2025 population estimates. Salaries for the 50 states come from World Population Review's 2025 "Governor Salary by State" table, while territorial figures are drawn from their respective statutes or official sources. Population estimates are from World Population Review's 2025 state/territory pages:

#	State / Territory	2025 Pop. (est.)	Gov. Salary (USD)
1	New York	19,997,100	\$250,000
2	Pennsylvania	13,139,800	\$229,642
3	Connecticut	3,626,000	\$226,711
4	California	39,663,800	\$224,020
5	Massachusetts	7,174,000	\$222,185
6	Illinois	12,778,100	\$205,700
7	Tennessee	7,126,000	\$204,336
8	Vermont	646,000	\$201,136
9	Washington	8,001,000	\$198,257
10	U.S. Virgin Islands	84,138	\$192,000 †
11	Hawaii	1,441,000	\$184,860
12	Maryland	6,213,000	\$184,000
13	Utah	3,455,000	\$182,900
14	Georgia	11,208,000	\$180,000
15	New Jersey	9,438,000	\$175,000
16	Virginia	8,715,000	\$175,000
17	Ohio	11,857,000	\$171,059

#	State / Territory	2025 Pop. (est.)	Gov. Salary (USD)
18	Delaware	1,018,000	\$171,000
19	Nevada	3,257,000	\$170,062
20	North Carolina	10,791,000	\$165,750
21	Wisconsin	5,930,000	\$165,568
22	Kentucky	4,538,000	\$164,355
23	Rhode Island	1,118,000	\$163,295
24	Michigan	10,003,000	\$159,300
25	Arkansas	3,081,000	\$158,739
26	Texas	31,853,800	\$153,750
27	Idaho	2,003,000	\$151,400
28	West Virginia	1,772,000	\$150,000
29	Oklahoma	4,059,000	\$147,000
30	New Hampshire	1,395,000	\$146,172
31	Alaska	720,000	\$145,000
32	North Dakota	780,000	\$143,646
33	Florida	23,839,600	\$141,400
34	Missouri	6,180,000	\$140,596
35	Wyoming	585,000	\$140,000
36	South Dakota	930,000	\$139,100
37	Indiana	6,876,000	\$134,051
38	Alabama	5,150,000	\$131,800
39	Iowa	3,240,000	\$130,000
40	Minnesota	5,785,000	\$127,629
41	Louisiana	4,523,000	\$125,185
42	Mississippi	2,940,000	\$122,160
43	Montana	1,122,000	\$118,397
44	Kansas	2,940,000	\$110,707
45	New Mexico	2,120,000	\$110,000
46	South Carolina	5,491,000	\$106,078
47	Nebraska	2,005,000	\$105,000
48	Oregon	4,271,000	\$98,600
49	Arizona	7,720,000	\$95,000
50	Colorado	5,920,000	\$90,000
51	Guam	169,000	\$90,000 ‡
52	American Samoa	46,029	\$85,000
53	Northern Mariana Islands	43,500	\$120,000
54	Maine	1,395,000	\$70,000
55	Puerto Rico	3,200,000	\$70,000

Following the release of the VIPOCC report—which was [emailed to then-Senate President Novelle Francis](#) (who later claimed he never received it)—the Legislature was expected to hold a public hearing to discuss the recommendations and inform the public. Under the law, if no legislative action was taken within 90 days, the recommendations would automatically take effect. That’s exactly what happened: the public was only made aware after the raises had already gone into effect. The sequence of events sparked significant distrust among community members, with many questioning the integrity of the process—especially as Mr. Francis claimed not to have received the email, and Government House issued its first statement only after the increases were implemented.

Current Senate President Milton Potter recently [announced the June 4 session](#) as a last opportunity for the executive branch to voluntarily roll back the increases. If the raises are not rescinded voluntarily, lawmakers have signaled their intent to introduce legislation to reverse the increases and potentially make additional adjustments to executive compensation. They are also prepared to seek legal remedies, including injunctive relief and constitutional challenges.

“After careful consultation with our legal counsel and emergency leadership meetings, we have determined that legislative action is necessary to address what we believe are fundamental questions of governmental authority and fiscal responsibility,” Mr. Potter said.

The raises [also apply](#) to twelve other central government officials as listed in the VIPOCC report, which recommended adjustments ranging from 2.2% to over 25%. These include top positions such as the Attorney General (+13.8%), Commissioner of Human Services (+2.2%), and the Virgin Islands Inspector General (+3.4%).

Governor Bryan has defended the increases, citing the need for competitive compensation to attract and retain qualified leadership. “This salary hasn’t changed in 20 years. If an independent commission isn’t trustworthy enough to suggest government salaries, what is?” he asked in a recent interview with the Consortium.

He also noted his administration’s fiscal achievements, including the repayment of retroactive wages, subsidized housing, elimination of the government's \$20 million WAPA bill, and stabilization of the Government Employees’ Retirement System (GERS). “We saved a retirement system that would be broke today,” Bryan said.

Yet, many Virgin Islanders are not convinced. Critics argue that while executive compensation has increased, basic public services continue to lag. On The Consortium's Facebook platform, one resident voiced frustration over the pay hikes, arguing that average citizens are already struggling to cover basic necessities like rent, food, and electricity. They suggested that public servants should share in those hardships, and that earning a modest wage would better align leaders with the people they serve.

Lieutenant Governor Roach himself has distanced from the raises, calling on the governor to rescind them and citing concerns over the commission’s integrity—particularly after Bryan appointed former VIPOCC chair Haldane Davies to lead the Bureau of Economic Research. Bryan dismissed the criticism, affirming that the appointments were merit-based and within legal bounds. Mr. Roach, who has indicated plans to run for governor, did not respond to The Consortium's request for comment regarding when he became aware of Davies’s selection as director of the Bureau of Economic Research.

If the June 4 session results in a legislative rollback, it could set a precedent for stricter oversight of compensation adjustments tied to automatic provisions. If not, court intervention may be the

next step.

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