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## **Bryan Calls for Union Testimony in Upcoming Session on Pension Double-Dipping**

**Gov. Bryan has called on union leaders to testify during a special legislative session addressing pension double dipping by elected officials, alongside proposals for self-funded health insurance reform and election law changes impacting public employees.**

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**Governor Albert Bryan Jr. By. GOV'T HOUSE.**

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. on Monday announced that he has requested union participation in an upcoming special session of the 36th Legislature to address what he called “the unfair practice of double dipping” by elected officials who collect both a government salary and a pension while in office.

“No elected official should collect the government pension and the government salary at the same time while earning a second pension from the same government,” Bryan said. “That weakens our retirement system and violates our public’s trust.”

The session, scheduled for Friday, will focus on three major proposals: government health insurance reform, the elimination of pension double-dipping, and a repeal of the law that requires government employees to take a six-month leave of absence to run for office.

The governor’s remarks come amid renewed scrutiny of fiscal fairness and government accountability, following a recent defeat in the Senate, which successfully [repealed salary increases](#) for the governor, lieutenant governor, and senior cabinet officials. “These are serious proposals in fairness, fiscal responsibility, and it's rooted in transparency,” he said.

Mr. Bryan emphasized that the goal is to gather input from workers across the government. “I have asked Senate President Milton Potter to invite representatives from our major labor unions to testify on this measure during this session,” he said. “So AFT, Steelworkers—we want them to come and show up and let the senators know how they feel about them being able to double dip when our rank-and-file employees—not even the governor—can double dip in such a way.”

The governor also voiced support for ending the six-month leave of absence rule for government employees seeking elected office. “That requirement is outdated. It creates unnecessary barriers to public service and limits access to the ballot,” Bryan said.

The first proposal on the agenda will establish a Special Committee on Government Health Insurance Reform, which would issue a request for proposals (RFP) for a self-funded group health and dental insurance plan for government employees and retirees.

“The goal is to compare the potential benefits of a self-funded model with the fixed-cost premium model that we currently use, and to give the government the information needed to make the best decisions for the people we serve,” Bryan explained.

To educate the public on the health insurance proposal, a live panel discussion will be broadcast Tuesday, July 29 from 6 to 7 p.m. on Government House’s social media pages and the Government Access Channel.

“These decisions matter,” the governor said. “They impact your health, your health care, your retirement security, and your right to participate in public life.”

The governor expressed confidence that lawmakers would support the reforms. “I am absolutely confident that the legislature agrees that these are fair proposals that they can put all their might behind for the betterment of the people of the Virgin Islands.”