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## Bryan Blasts Senators for Avoiding Debate on Bills That Would Curb Pensions and Empower Working-Class Candidates

**Bryan's administration denounced the move to send bills on double-dipping and job retention for candidates to committee, warning it shields lawmakers from public scrutiny and keeps working-class Virgin Islanders from entering elected office.**

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### Governor Albert Bryan Jr.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. is furious with the 36th Legislature's use of a procedural maneuver to avoid debate on proposals to ban “double-dipping” by lawmakers and to allow government employees to keep their jobs while running for public office.

In a statement from Government House, the decision to send Bills 36-0124 and 36-0125 to committee instead of debating them during Friday's special legislative session was criticized as "hypocrisy," accusing legislators of prioritizing self-interest over critical reform and shielding themselves from public accountability.

The statement notes that the 35th Legislature voted down a similar bill seeking to overturn the rule requiring government employees to take a 6-month leave of absence before running for office. Removing the measure from the agenda in the current legislature "shows this rule serves incumbents and shuts out new voices," argues the Government House statement.

Legislative inaction on Bill 36-0125 means that sitting senators can continue collecting a full pension from a previous position in the government service, a practice that "drains GERS and undermines integrity," the statement asserts.

Legislation passed earlier this year shows that senators agree that pension reform is necessary, argued the governor, however "when faced with reforms that would affect their own situations lawmakers walked away."

The issue is particularly poignant because the government is preparing to have to pay an additional \$12 to 14 per year due to a [three percent hike in employer contributions](#) to the Government Employees Retirement System. Even with increased revenue to GERS due to the permanent increase in rum cover over rates, "that win for stability should have been a reason to act locally, not an excuse to do nothing," the Government House statement argues.

"This is not leadership. It is preservation of perks...they put themselves ahead of public interest," the statement concludes, vowing continued pressure on these two issues from Government House.