

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Court Denies Los Angeles Trip, Approves Limited Travel for Jenifer O'Neal

A judge has approved Jenifer O'Neal's travel to Maryland for a wedding and shower, but denied her request for a Los Angeles trip. Her attorney criticized the original travel denials as undermining the presumption of innocence while awaiting trial.

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Jenifer O'Neal arriving at the District Court in St. Thomas on Friday, Jan. 10, 2025. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

ST. THOMAS — Former Office of Management and Budget Director Jenifer O'Neal will be permitted limited travel while awaiting trial on federal fraud and bribery charges,

following a recent ruling by District Court Judge Mark Kearney.

Ms. O'Neal, through her attorney Dale Lionel Smith, had requested permission to make three round trips between St. Thomas and Maryland. The proposed travel included: an initial trip from August 23 to September 2, a second from September 12 to September 28 which included "a trip to Los Angeles with her daughter," and a final trip from September 30 to October 6.

The request, submitted to Pretrial Services on August 8, was denied for the first two trips. In response, Ms. O'Neal's legal team challenged the denial in court, calling the rationale "extremely concerning" and describing it as "an abhorrent limitation of the presumption of innocence."

Judge Kearney issued a decision on August 15, granting partial approval. He found "a basis to allow limited travel for a family wedding shower and family wedding but not the other requests." As a result, Ms. O'Neal will be allowed to travel for the wedding shower beginning no earlier than August 28 and must return no later than September 2. For the wedding itself, she may travel to Maryland on September 30 and return by October 6.

The court denied the request for the family trip to Los Angeles, and Ms. O'Neal must remain in regular contact with Pretrial Services, making herself available to check in by phone at their discretion.

Ms. O'Neal's co-defendant, former Virgin Islands Police Commissioner Ray Martinez, was previously [granted permission to travel](#) to Maryland due to the serious illness of a family friend. He was scheduled to return to the territory on Monday.