

Police Union Accuses Government of Bad Faith in Labor Negotiations, Demands Immediate Action on Pay and Conditions

The Police Benevolent Association says years of delays, broken promises, and unsafe conditions have eroded trust. The PBA is demanding overdue step increases, retroactive pay, and warning it will escalate through legal and public avenues if ignored.

Government / **Published On September 15, 2025 04:56 PM /**

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VIPD Units on St. Croix. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

The Police Benevolent Association (PBA) is accusing the Government of the Virgin Islands of bad faith bargaining and continued violations of the collective bargaining agreement, citing years of delays in addressing wages, step increases, and retroactive pay owed to officers since 2023.

In a letter dated September 15, 2025, addressed to Governor Albert Bryan Jr., senior officials, and legislative leaders, PBA President Joel Browne Connors and St. Croix President Melford Murray detailed their frustration with what they described as a “pattern of delay, avoidance, and bad faith in the negotiation process.”

“Despite repeated assurances from the Chief Negotiator, the Government has failed to provide meaningful responses regarding wages, retroactive pay, and step increases that have been owed since 2023,” the letter stated. Between February and September 2025, the union says it has been met only with excuses tied to court hearings, personal matters, and scheduling conflicts, leaving officers with stagnant wages, unsafe working conditions, and broken promises.

The PBA further argued that the government’s use of a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) to counter union grievances has eroded trust. The association said it never authorized or sanctioned any strike, and described the move as defamatory. Since the TRO, they noted, officers have continued to leave the department for agencies offering better pay and benefits.

Union leaders said they have worked in good faith to support morale and community engagement. In July, the PBA organized a week-long series of events honoring Honorary Officer DJ Daniel, and it is currently leading the Pink Patch Project for Breast Cancer Awareness. Yet members continue to face what they described as “unsafe and substandard conditions,” including using non-patrol vehicles for patrol duties, cuts to officers’ overtime while supervisors benefit from inflated pay, and inequities between frontline officers and those assigned to office roles.

The union also outlined a timeline of broken commitments:

- On February 24, 2025, the PBA was told responses would come after hearings and personal matters.
- On August 19, 2025, they were assured updates would be provided by mid-September.
- On September 10, 2025, another delay was announced, with a vague promise of a response by September 15.

As of the letter’s writing, no concrete response had been received. “The Government’s continued inaction and evasions are unacceptable,” the PBA declared. “If these matters are not addressed immediately, the PBA will have no choice but to escalate our response through every available legal, administrative, and public avenue.”

The association listed its demands as follows:

1. Immediate implementation of all step increases owed since 2023.
2. Retroactive pay calculations using correct overtime data.
3. A firm and enforceable negotiation schedule with deadlines.

4. Good faith compliance with the collective bargaining agreement, including grievance and disciplinary protections.

“The time for delay has long passed,” the union wrote. “The Government must meet its obligations to the men and women who risk their lives daily to protect this Territory.”

Copies of the letter were sent to Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach, the members of the 36th Legislature, union allies including AFT and SEIU, and media outlets across the territory.

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