

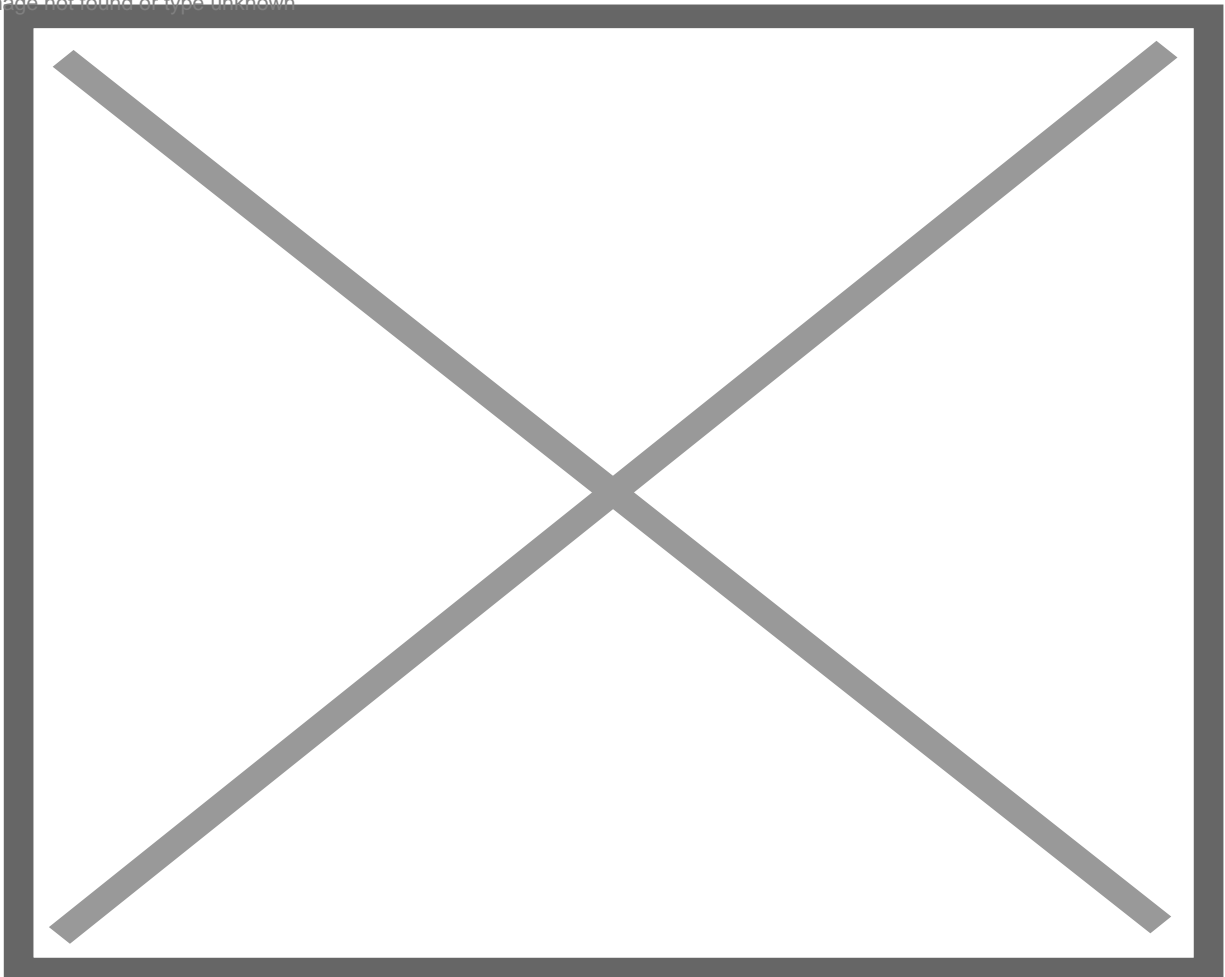
## Agencies Told to Expedite Data Submission as \$35,000 Minimum Salary Takes Effect October 1

**Senator Kurt Vialet called for accountability, saying delays in agency reporting translate directly into delays for employees. The law raises the minimum salary from \$27,040, despite Governor Bryan's warnings about long-term fiscal risks.**

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**Senator Kurt Vialet. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE.**

With the new fiscal year beginning October 1, Senator Kurt Vialet is urging Government of the Virgin Islands agencies to submit salary data without delay to ensure workers benefit from the mandated \$35,000 minimum annual salary.

The information, submitted through the Notice of Personnel Action (NOPA), must reach the Department of Personnel (DOP) to guarantee timely adjustments in employee paychecks. The increase stems from Act 8995, which raised the minimum salary for full-time government employees from \$27,040 to \$35,000.

Violet said the measure was introduced to offset the Virgin Islands' high cost of living, with housing, groceries, and utilities remaining significantly more expensive than in many mainland jurisdictions. "Our employees cannot afford unnecessary delays," Violet said. "The Legislature acted to bring relief through this salary adjustment, and it is now the responsibility of agencies to ensure that the data is provided to DOP, so the increases are reflected for the fiscal year. This is about planning, accountability, and making good on our commitment to our workforce."

Governor Albert Bryan initially vetoed the bill, but senators later overrode his decision. He argued the measure posed risks to the territory's financial stability. "We agree that workers in the Virgin Islands should be paid more," Bryan said. "And just last year, I expressed my support for raising the minimum wage. But a nearly \$40 million increase in annual payroll expenses—without a plan to pay for it—is not something we can responsibly implement."

The administration's fiscal analysis estimated that the increase could dramatically raise operational costs and add as much as \$200 million in territorial debt over five years. Inflation and weakened purchasing power were also raised as concerns.

On Monday, Mr. Violet stated that large agencies such as the V.I. Department of Education, one of the territory's largest employers, must use their internal human resources processes to move quickly. He also stressed that semi-autonomous and independent instrumentalities are responsible for implementing the increase within their structures.

The senator stressed that the pay raise is effective October 1, 2025, and agencies should provide employees with clear reports on when the changes will appear in their pay. "The submission of salary data by each agency is not optional but the law and should be followed to ensure that employees see the benefit of the increase without delay," he said. "Delays at the agency level translate directly into delays for employees. Submitting the information on time guarantees a smooth transition and prevents the kind of bureaucratic setbacks that undermine confidence."