

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Violet Blasts Delays in Implementing \$35,000 Minimum as Francis Floats “Nuclear Options”

Senators pressed agencies to issue the \$35,000 minimum immediately, even though Gov. Bryan had warned before the bill became law that the real cost would exceed the \$3M base increase, with cascading raises potentially pushing the total toward \$40 million.

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Senator Kurt Violet has expressed frustration over the apparent delays in processing wage increases for government employees under [Act 8995](#).

The contentious piece of legislation, authored by Senator Violet, raised the minimum annual salary of full-time government workers from \$27,040 to \$35,000. The increase

also applies to full-time employees of semi-autonomous entities and independent instrumentalities. The wage increase should have taken effect on October 1, 2025.

Well over a month later, Senator Violet has lambasted various departments for their failure to finalize the increases.

“This body identified the funding for the increase for all 600-plus employees. It was in a lump sum. It was a line item,” Senator Violet recalled. According to the lawmaker, Office of Management and Budget director Julio Rhymer promised to “parcel those additional monies to each department according to the number of employees.” Senator Violet insisted that “the monies are there.”

Notwithstanding, many government employees remain without the salary increases they are rightfully due, said Mr. Violet. “This government has the ability to produce checks,” he said, referencing “8,000 SNAP checks in two days.”

“The minimum wage increase is \$3 million. Less than \$300,000 a month. Let's get those NOPAS done. It's unfair,” he said. However, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. repeatedly cautioned that a full financial assessment must include ripple effects, such as salary and fringe-benefit increases for higher-paid employees seeking to maintain wage separation. According to figures cited by the governor and an analysis by the GVI finance team, this “cascade” of raises could push the total cost of implementation to [between \\$27 million and \\$40 million](#). The Consortium has learned that several departments have struggled with implementation, including at least one agency that must now secure millions in additional funding to raise the salaries of employees who were already earning \$35,000.

Mr. Violet issued a directive to department heads to ensure increases are processed by the “next pay day.”

Senator Novelle Francis, who chairs the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance, agreed. He called the delay “ridiculous” and urged “movement.”

“Everywhere I go in the community, they keep asking when are they going to see this increase?” Sen. Francis shared.

Francis alluded to Legislative action, or perhaps inaction, to ensure the raises are paid out. “We have to take a position at some point that nothing will move until such time as we're able to ensure that our employees get their \$35,000.” He joined Violet in describing the situation as “unfair.”

“We're working with the executive branch to move things along,” Sen. Francis assured. He warned, however, that the Legislature may have to exercise “nuclear options” which would involve finalizing the increases, or else nothing moves.