

Gittens Demands Answers on St. Croix Morgue Failures, Forensic Delays, and Years of Unresolved Deficiencies

Senate Vice President Kenneth Gittens has asked the AG for detailed answers on St. Croix’s morgue operations, missing pathology services, body transfers to St. Thomas, and taxpayer costs, calling the long-standing failures a matter of dignity and justice.

Government / **Published On January 15, 2026 06:39 PM /**

Staff Consortium **January 15, 2026**

Image not found or type unknown



Sen. Gittens visited the Wilfred “Bomba” Allick Port and Transshipment Center on Thursday, where modular trailers intended for St. Croix’s morgue remain in storage.

ST. CROIX — Citing years of unresolved problems and the ongoing impact on grieving families, Senate Vice President Kenneth L. Gittens has formally requested detailed answers from Attorney

General Gordon C. Rhea regarding persistent deficiencies in morgue operations and forensic pathology services in the St. Croix District.

In a letter transmitted Wednesday, Gittens called for a comprehensive accounting of the current status of the St. Croix morgue, including a clear and accountable timeline for its completion. He also requested specific information on the absence of a pathologist assigned to St. Croix cases, an issue that has long forced the transfer of bodies to St. Thomas for autopsies.

The senator's inquiry seeks data on the number of outstanding cases, how many bodies were transported to St. Thomas for post-mortem examinations, and the total cost incurred by the Department of Justice during calendar year 2025 for those transports.

"This is not simply an administrative issue — it is a matter of dignity, justice, and basic fairness to the families of St. Croix," Gittens said. "Families should not have to wait weeks or months to bury their loved ones because our territory lacks proper facilities and staffing. This situation has gone on far too long."

Gittens also pressed the Attorney General for information about a modular morgue reportedly acquired for the territory. He asked how long the unit has been on St. Croix, whether it remains stored at the container port exposed to the elements, and how much taxpayers are paying for its continued storage. Additionally, he requested guidance on whether legislative action is required to move forward with the long-delayed construction of a permanent morgue facility on the island.

While the letter demands accountability, Gittens emphasized that his outreach is also intended to facilitate cooperation and solutions.

"The Legislature has a responsibility to conduct oversight, but we also stand ready to assist," he said. "If legislative action, funding support, or statutory changes are needed to finally resolve this issue, then that conversation must happen — and it must happen now."

Speaking from his experience as a retired law enforcement executive, Gittens highlighted the broader implications of delayed or inadequate forensic services.

"As someone who spent a career in law enforcement, I know firsthand that timely and professional forensic services are essential — not optional," he said. "Delays in autopsies affect criminal investigations, court proceedings, and most importantly, the emotional well-being of families seeking closure. Our people deserve better."

Gittens reiterated that the continued practice of transporting bodies between districts because of insufficient facilities on St. Croix is neither sustainable nor fair. He said the reliance on temporary measures has compounded the hardship faced by families already coping with loss.

"This is about respect for human life and respect for the people of St. Croix," he said. "The time for temporary fixes and unanswered questions has passed. This matter deserves immediate attention and resolution."

The senator said he remains committed to pursuing swift corrective action once the requested information is provided, underscoring that the issue extends beyond infrastructure to the core functions of justice, public safety, and humane treatment of the deceased and their families.