

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Vialet Wants Cafeteria Workers To Become Full-Time Employees, Calls Denial 'An Injustice'

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Freshman Sen. Kurt Vialet is calling on the Department of Education's (DOE) Commissioner-designee Sharon McCollum, PhD and on Governor Kenneth Mapp to set in place the necessary reform to make school cafeteria workers full-time employees.

According to Vialet, a former educator, cafeteria workers are hard-working employees who deserve the same treatment as other DOE employees.

A press release issued by the senator's office outlined a number of reasons why cafeteria workers, who clock 6.5 hours a day, at minimum wage, and are denied the 1.5 hours that would qualify them as full-time employees, should receive salaried pay. Among them:

- being "forced to go without pay during the summer and Christmas vacations"
- Serving meals to more than 2,000 students per day
- Navigating extreme temperatures in the kitchen, as well as managing kitchen activities

Cafeteria workers are currently Per Diem employees.

In light of the reasons listed, Violet said he is "therefore calling on Commissioner-designee Sharon McCollum, PhD and Governor Kenneth Mapp to designate these per diem/part-time employees as full-time employees who receive health insurance and retirement benefits."

Violet, the top vote-getter in the 2014 General Election, added, "These employees need 1.5 [more] hours per day to be considered full-time employees. Furthermore, GERS can definitely benefit from additional contributing members."

Like other DOE employees who may require medical attention, Violet said cafeteria workers are also "prone to injury [and] thus are in dire need of health insurance."

In concluding his call for fair treatment for the employees, Violet said the cafeteria worker's position is reimbursed by the federal government, so DOE should not experience a significant impact on its budget.

"Please put an end to this injustice," he said.