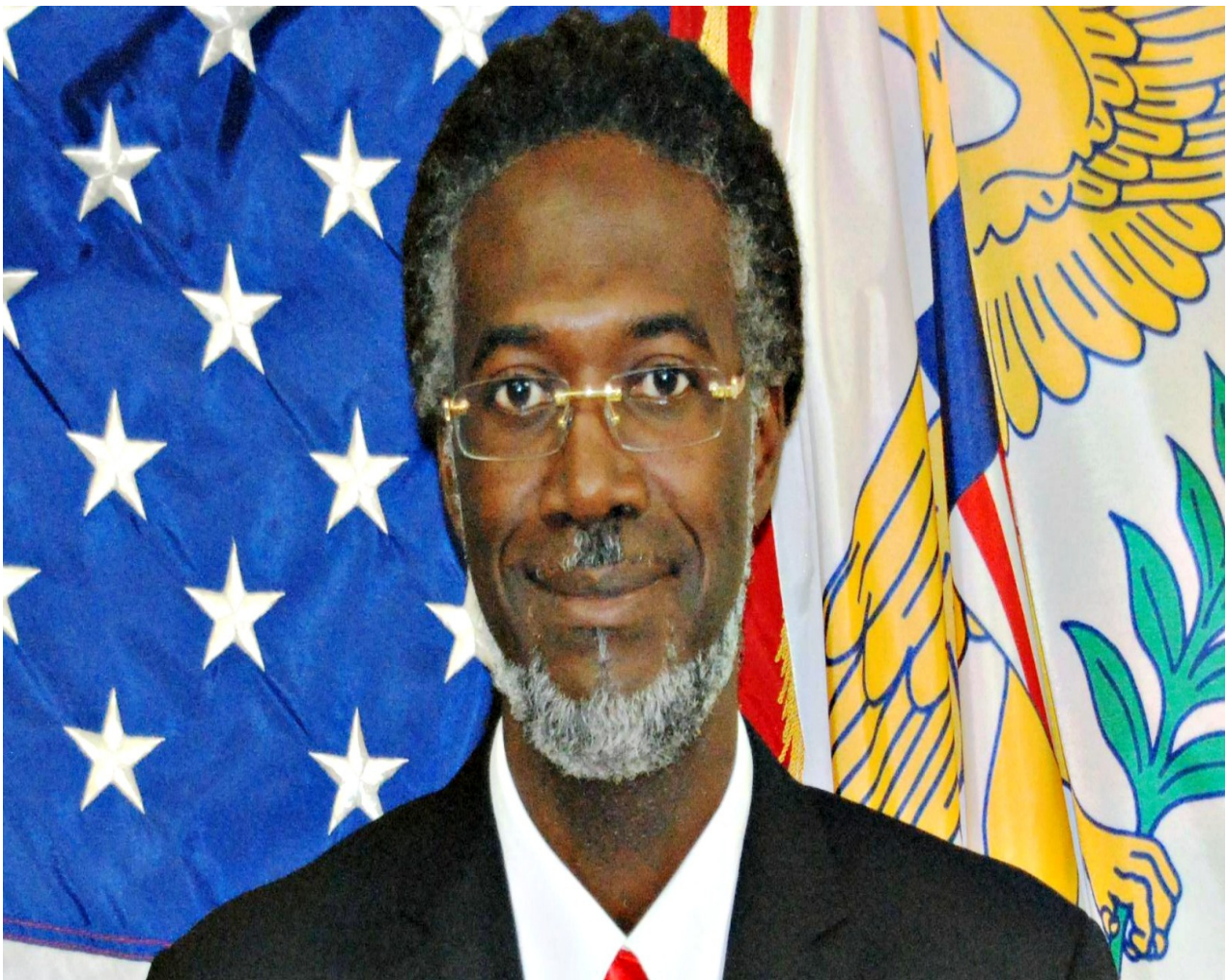


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Sen. Nelson Hosting Press Conference To Introduce Pay Structure For Elected Officials, Cabinet Members

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St. Croix Sen. Terrence "Positive" Nelson is expected to introduce a new piece of legislation aimed at rethinking the salary structure of elected officials, judges, and cabinet members of the Virgin Islands government at a press conference Tuesday, March 17 at 10 a.m. at the Bandstand in Budhoe Park, Frederiksted.

The move comes as the fallout continues over pay increases governor Kenneth Mapp issued to new cabinet members, which has caused many residents and some elected officials to call foul because of prior revelations by Mapp that financially the territory is in "critical condition."

"Our territory has never been in such a state in our history," the governor said in January [during his State of the Territory address](#), speaking of the islands' financial crisis. He made known that night a budget shortfall of \$91.2 million, and revealed that his team had no money on hand to push promised initiatives of change and growth.

Yet, in direct contrast to his statements, the governor has given pay increases by the thousands to many of his new cabinet members, including Valdamier Collens, the Commissioner-designee of the Department of Finance, who is being paid \$125,000 annually – a \$28,000 increase over his predecessor, Angel Dawson. At \$125,000, Collens makes the same salary as Lt. Governor Osbert Potter.

At the press conference, Nelson is also expected to introduce legislation aimed at decreasing the amount of senators in the V.I. Legislature from 15 to 11. He is suggesting the breakdown of Senate members be as follows: three from St. Croix, three from St. Thomas, one from St. John, and four At-Large.

Other items to be discussed include:

- The newly amended law regarding Act 7700 and the decriminalizing of cannabis in the territory
- Details pertaining to Nelson's Medical Cannabis Educational Expedition to Washington, D.C. and Colorado, scheduled for April 2015
- Virgin Islands Infrastructure Reconstruction Plan
- Hovenssa
- Recognition of VI History Month
- Perspective on the new administration
- Nelson's upcoming annual events