

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Sen. Gittens Defends 'No' Vote Against Bowry: It's "A Waste of Taxpayers Money"

Politics / **Published On May 18, 2015 10:35 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **May 18, 2015**



Senator Kenneth "Kenny" Gittens

ST. CROIX -- Senator Kenneth "Kenny" Gittens is defending his "no" vote against Governor Kenneth Mapp's nominee for Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Nellon Bowry, because the senator said Bowry lacks the commitment needed to affect change in the office he wants to lead.

Nellon Bowry, an experienced and knowledgeable man in the finance sector, who has previously headed OMB, has committed to only one year if approved by the senate.

For Gittens, that's a problem.

"I certainly have no doubt in my mind that Mr. Bowry is fully skilled, knowledgeable and capable to run the office, but what concerns me is the fact that his clock to hang up the hat is already ticking and we will find ourselves in this position again in just a few short months. This I view as a waste of the taxpayers time and money," Gittens said in a press release issued this morning.

On Friday, the Committee on Rules and Judiciary, chaired by Gittens, approved Bowry 6-1, sending his nomination to the full senate body for its ratification.

Members of the Rules and Judiciary committee include: Gittens, Vice Chair Janette Millin Young, Neville James, Novelle E. Francis, Jean Forde, Justin Harrigan and Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly. All the senators, while expressing concerns about Bowry's commitment, [voted in the affirmative](#) regardless.

Gittens, however, suggested that Mapp should continue searching for someone to head the office, while Bowry could operate in the role of adviser to the eventual nominee. It would save time and money, and the government would retain Bowry's knowledge, according to Gittens.

"Some of the ideas and practices Mr. Bowry has testified that he wants to bring to the Office of Management and Budget are innovative and best to be carried out by the person who implemented them," Gittens said. "The way I see it, if we are going to be looking for someone to head the department in another six months or so, we might as well just continue looking for that suitable candidate and maybe Bowry may better serve as a financial advisor."

The second-term senator said his vote was not in disrespect to Bowry or anyone else, and while his decision was seen as unpopular, Gittens believes he made the right call in his quest to find suitable candidates to head executive branch agencies and departments.