

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp To Senators: Remove Requirement That Ties Senators Salary To Lowest Paid Commissioner

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ST. CROIX -- The event was expected to be a simple ceremony at Government House in Christiansted, where two of Governor Kenneth Mapp's nominees -- the Virgin Islands Police Department Commissioner, Delroy Richards, Sr. and Pedro Cruz, commissioner of Sports, Parks and Recreation -- were scheduled to take the oath of office. And they did.

But the ceremony was given a new lease of life when Mapp took aim at members of the 31st Legislature, calling the Senate out for what he deemed the [devaluing of locals while outsiders are treated like royalty](#).

Yet, even as the Senate will soon vote to approve the 11 cabinet nominees it voted down to honor the compromise between the Legislature and Government House, Mapp said he will raise the salaries of cabinet members who demonstrate strong performance in the coming months.

"I'm not making mischief," Mapp said. "Do not accept my words as idle chat. I am serious."

Before the governor acts, however, there's one problem: a clause in a law tying the salaries of senators to the lowest paid commissioner. If the law isn't tweaked to remove this language, the salary of senators would also increase.

"I use this opportunity to ask the legislature to decouple, to remove in the law the requirement that the salaries of senators are tied to the lowest-paid salary of the commissioners of the executive branch of government," Mapp said.

The chief executive was giving remarks on Cruz, mentioning the awesome responsibility the commissioner has to transform Sports, Parks and Recreation. The governor indicated that such service is worthy of lucrative pay.

"I thank you for your willingness to serve. I thank you for your sacrifice," Mapp added.

The territory's leader said he intends to make his request to remove the link between senators salary and the lowest paid commissioner official in his administration's upcoming budget, which, he said, is nearly complete.

"The reason I'm doing that is because I'm accepting the recommendation and suggestions of a few members of the Legislature that says, 'let the members of your cabinet work a few months and as they perform, progress and deliver value to the community, then pay them more,'" Mapp said. "And I am confident that Commissioner Cruz is going to perform and create value for this territory and our children, and I plan to pay him more," he concluded.