

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gittens Renews Call For Increased Law Enforcement Initiatives Following Violent Weekend On St. Croix

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Senator Kenneth "Kenny" Gittens

ST. CROIX -- With an increase in gun violence being perpetrated over the weekend, Senator Kenneth L. Gittens, vice-chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, said while he is decrying the violent crimes and condemning those perpetrating the acts, he remains relentless in his quest to see a unified law enforcement front against the criminal element in our community.

“Almost on a daily basis we have been hearing of residents in our community falling victim to some sort of violent crime. In this past weekend alone, we have heard of multiple shootings and a home invasion. What makes these lawless acts of violence even more alarming to me is that in most of the incidents, the perpetrators remain at large and most likely will continue to prey on the unsuspecting residents and visitors in our community,” Senator Gittens said.

Gittens said he is still calling for a unified law enforcement front to confront and disarm the handful of lawless individuals. He said these persons show a total disregard for human life and are crippling the social environment and our economy because residents are not even feeling safe in their own homes.

“I’ve been calling for collaboration between the local and federal entities and local supplemental manpower for the Virgin Islands Police Department for some time now. I don’t know what else it is going to take to get the administration to move swiftly to get more boots on the ground and heighten the law enforcement presence in our community. The police cannot see all or do all, but having supplemental assistance from other agencies can certainly augment the stressed resources within the Virgin Islands Police Department,” the senator said.

There has been a lull in traffic initiatives and routine vehicular stops that have been proven to work as effective crime-fighting tools, according to Senator Gittens. “Without traffic initiatives and routine traffic stops, these criminals are free to drive vehicles from one end of the island to the next without a high probability of being intercepted by police. These stops could net illegal firearms and even prevent some of these crimes.”

The senator said he is encouraging heads of agencies with law enforcement arms to step up to the plate and express their willingness to be a part of the joint initiative and a part of bringing back the atmosphere of peace to the community. Senator Gittens also encourages residents to continue being the eyes and ears of the police and share information on crimes they may know about.