

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gittens Bill, Still In Draft, Aims To Reinstate GERS Loan Program

VIC News / **Published On December 18, 2015 08:05 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **December 18, 2015**



ST. CROIX – Senator Kenneth L. Gittens said on Friday that a number of inquiries from local media has prompted him to give a status update on the bill draft request he submitted, with hopes of bringing some relief to retirees and active members of the Government Employees Retirement System, according to a press release the senator's office issued this afternoon. The Consortium reached out to Mr. Gittens today seeking information on the measure.

Mr. Gittens said he submitted a request to the Legal Counsel Division of the Legislature for a bill draft regarding the reinstitution of the GERS loan program, but has not received one as yet.

“I have yet to receive an official final draft of the document from our Legal Counsel Office. In the meantime, I've met with a majority of senators who have discussed that the preferred avenue to move the bill forward would be to have the measure go through the committee process, rather than bringing it straight to the floor for session,” he said.

The senator further explained that after discussions with his colleagues, he decided against rushing Legal Counsel to produce the relative bill draft for this week's session.

“I did not push for it to come to the floor for consideration for this past session, but I do, however, plan to continue my plight and move this measure forward. It is my intent for all members – active and retired - who may qualify for these loan benefits, to be able to get at least a personal loan from the program,” Mr. Gittens, chairman of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary, added.

In addition to the information that he has submitted for the bill draft, Mr. Gittens said fellow St. Croix Democratic Senator Kurt Vialet has approached him and advised him that he is interested in offering an amendment to the bill.

The second-term Democrat concluded that he is very much aware of the hardship that the beneficiaries are experiencing and will continue to shepherd the legislation through the process.