

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Sen. Novelle Francis: Territory Needs to Resolve REAL ID Compliance Issues Before It's Too Late

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ST. CROIX -- Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr. is urging speedy action to bring Virgin Islands' drivers licenses into compliance with REAL ID standards, in light of the Department of Homeland Security's intention to restrict the use of driver's licenses for domestic air travel if the license is not REAL ID compliance, a press release Mr. Francis' office issued on Monday states.

According to the release, since taking office, Mr. Francis, the Chair of the Committee on Homeland Security, Public Safety and Justice, has monitored the REAL ID issue. He recently met with Mr. Lawrence Olive, director of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, to receive a status update of the territory's efforts to achieve compliance.

Mr. Francis calls the territory's failure to achieve compliance "problematic", particularly as it stands to affect the many Virgin Islanders who use their driver's licenses for domestic air travel.

"In December 2014, Virgin Islanders witnessed the roll out of what we were told were REAL ID compliant licenses, yet here we are no closer to having this system in place," said the first-term Democrat. "It's a slap in the face to the people of this territory, considering how much time and money have been spent so far. While I understand that we don't have the luxury of time."



Sen. Novelle Francis, Jr.

The Department of Homeland Security has indicated that it will soon make a decision on whether the Transportation Security Administration would enforce the REAL ID standards. If announced, there would be a 120 day window before the law is enforced. If the Virgin Islands is not in compliance before the end of the 120 day period, residents would not be able to use their driver's licenses for domestic air travel.

Francis is encouraging Virgin Islanders to apply for their passports or passport cards. He will also continue to monitor the Bureau's progress on REAL ID compliance.

"At this point, several things can happen. The extension requested by Governor Mapp can be granted, the territory can achieve compliance or residents can start making plans so they are not caught unprepared if the planned changes take effect," Mr. Francis concluded.