

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Sen. Neville James Wants Governor Mapp To Veto Legislative Investment Initiative Fund Bill

Politics / **Published On January 15, 2016 10:48 PM /**

Staff **January 15, 2016**



ST. CROIX – Senate President Neville James sent a formal letter to Governor Kenneth Mapp on Thursday requesting that the Legislative Reinvestment Initiative Fund Bill be vetoed, citing the possibility that it may contradict the separation of powers doctrine, a press release Mr. James' office issued late Friday has confirmed.

The move comes after Mr. James, Senators Kenneth Gittens, Jean Forde and others denounced, [through press releases](#), accusations that the bill's \$1.5 million would not be used for local, nonprofit initiatives, but rather to help fund senators' upcoming campaigns. There were also claims that the bill was to repay senators for supporting the ArcLight/GVI agreement.

According to the release, Mr. James made the request after having several conversation with Mr. Mapp about bill no. 31-0299 -- an act amending Title 33 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 11 pertaining to government funds -- which would allocate \$1.5 million to senators of the Legislature to use as philanthropic donations to community organizations in need of financial assistance.

The separation of powers doctrine, the release states, requires that a government be divided into independent, but equal, branches of power. This allows each branch to avoid operational conflicts, but also prevent one from becoming more powerful than the others.

"This is an influential piece of legislation, but the ability for our government to perform proper checks and balances are also a vital part of efficient operation. It behooves this Body to assure that the separation of powers between government branches is recognized," James said. "This veto will allow the Body to relanguage the measure in accordance with all federal and local laws," Mr. James said.

The senator added that there are numerous organizations who reach out to members of the Legislature for financial assistance and the positive effect the fund would have on the community would be significant.

"As I've stated before, this legislation would offer an opportunity for relief to the many impactful nonprofit entities in our community who might need assistance for their vital operations, and in order for the bill to be implemented properly we must assure that its language is sound in nature," Mr. James concluded.