

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Over \$1.8 Million In Child Support Collected In Four Months As Deadbeat Dads Man Up

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ST. THOMAS -- Last September, the Department of Justice announced what it dubbed “Operation Support Our Children”, an initiative that sought to collect more than \$29 million in child support payments accumulated by delinquent parents, 99 percent of them fathers, over the years.

DOJ had decided that it would take drastic measures to force collections: the confiscation of business, driver’s and professional licenses for any parent who owes \$2,500 or more in child support payments and have been delinquent for more than 30 days. DOJ also established a relationship with the U.S. Department of State, according to Mr. Walker, and any parent that owed more than \$2,500 for more than 30 days, would have their

passport withdrawn, barring that person from traveling overseas.

On Monday night, Governor Kenneth Mapp revealed that the action has so far been immensely successful, collecting what he called an "unprecedented" \$1.8 million.

"I am proud to tell you tonight, in just its four months, the "Operation Support Our Children" initiative resulted in \$1.8 million being collected for the care of our children. This is unprecedented. The Department of Justice will continue to work to recover as much as is owed to the children and their struggling single parents," the governor said.

In September, Mr. Walker said something had to be done because the territory's children were the ones being most affected when arrears went uncollected.

"Unfortunately in the Virgin Islands each year, the total amount owed by parents with delinquent child support accounts continues to grow to the point where drastic action must be taken by the department of justice to address this problem," Mr. Walker said, adding that DOJ has direct oversight responsibilities for the Paternity and Child Support Division (PCSD).

Back then, approximately 1,728 parents in the Virgin Islands owed \$29,599,919.52 in overdue child support. "This is a tremendous amount of money that should not have been allowed to grow to this point," Mr. Walker said in September.