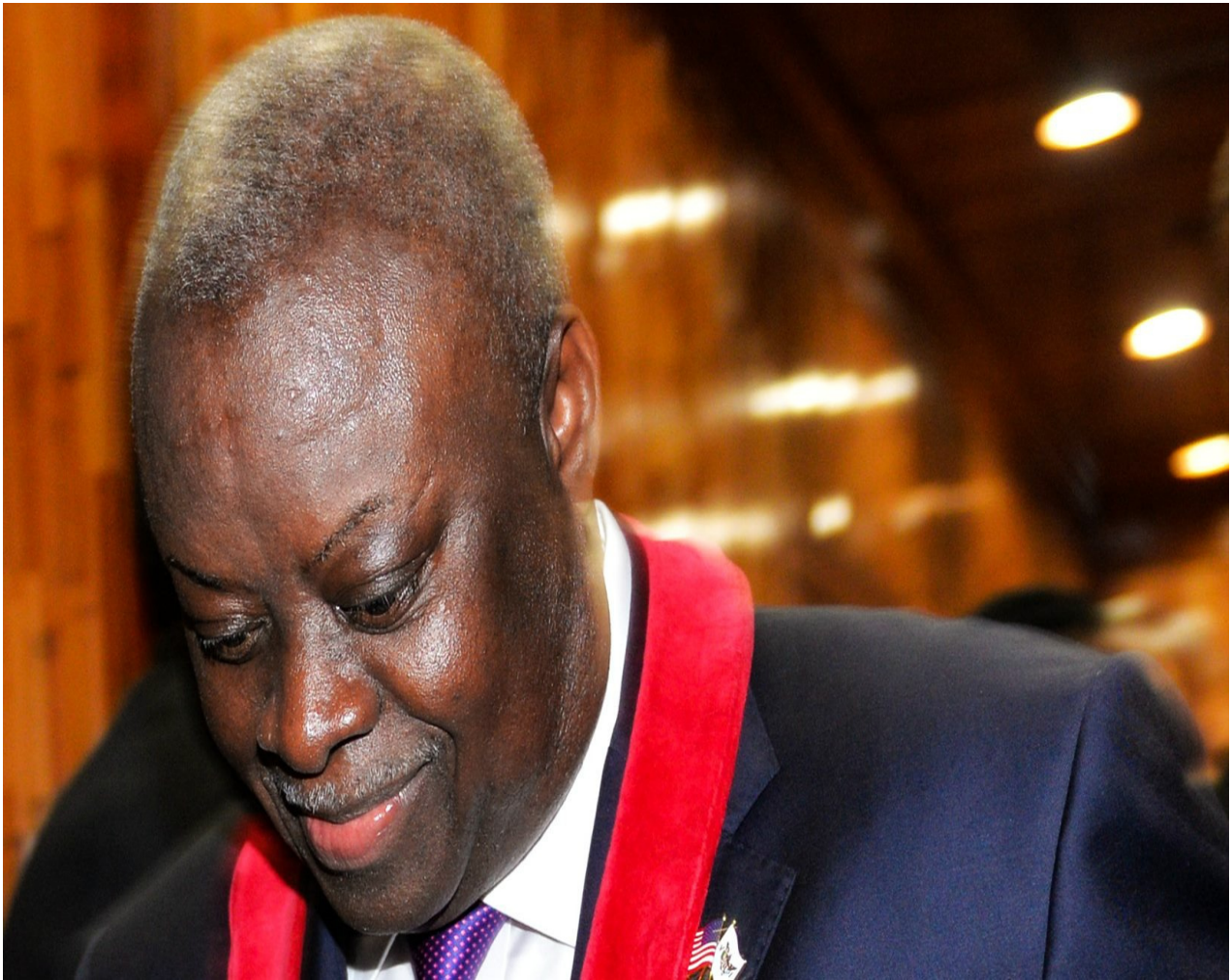


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bill Instructing WICO To Buy Property Where Governors Will Reside Becomes Law

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ST. THOMAS -- Governor House announced on Wednesday that a measure instructing the West Indian Company (WICO), a government-owned but self-governed (semiautonomous) entity, to buy property next to Government House here, that would serve as the official residence of the Governor of the Virgin Islands, has been allowed to become law. A bill that sits on the governor's desk for ten days without action being taken automatically becomes law.

[Bill no. 31-0295](#), sponsored by Senators Myron Jackson and Clifford Graham, and co-sponsored by no less than 9 other senators, seeks to resolve "the ongoing effort to find suitable housing for the Governor of the Virgin Islands," and mandates that the GVI,

acting through WICO, "negotiate with the owner of parcels no. 21, 22, 23 and 24 Dronningen's Gade, to acquire such property for no more than the average appraised value of three recent independent appraisals."

Mr. Jackson told The Consortium this morning that he had previously spoken to Governor John P. de Jongh about purchasing the property, but his administration said there were not enough funds at the time. It's a decision that Mr. Jackson has characterized as lack of vision. "We now have to pay more for it," he said, making known that the price of the property back then was less than its current valuation.

The measure also authorizes WICO to lease the property for up to \$8,000 monthly, so long as the lease makes clear that those payments be credited towards the acquisition of the property. The bill includes specifics as they relate to security and maintenance. The law will provide temporary housing for Governor Mapp until the property is purchased and added to the lot on which Government House sits.

Correction, January 4, 2016: A previous version of this story stated that Governor Kenneth Mapp had signed bill no. 31-0295 into law. That's incorrect. Mr. Mapp allowed the measure to become law after it sat on his desk for 10 days. We have updated the story to reflect the correct information.