

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Potter Visits VI Inmates In Arizona Jail; Expresses Concern With Treatment Of Prisoners

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While in Arizona at the National Lieutenant Governor's Association (NLGA) Business Meeting last week, Lieutenant Governor Osbert E. Potter visited the Saguaro Correctional Facility in Eloy, Arizona, where there are 63 Virgin Islands inmates housed at that facility, Mr. Potter's office announced Tuesday. He was accompanied by Rick Mullgrav, Director of the Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections.

According to the release, the purpose of the site visit was to conduct an assessment on the quality of housing and treatment being provided to Virgin Islands inmates. The Saguaro officials graciously welcomed Mr. Potter and gave him a tour of the facility, according to the release. The lieutenant governor said he was pleased with the overall

structure of the facility, which he described as modern. However, he expressed concern over some matters regarding the V.I. inmates.

"I had an opportunity to speak with many of the inmates one on one and in group settings. After those discussions, there were a lot of issues that were troubling to me and that I will be following up on, as far as the inmates' complaints are concerned," Mr. Potter said.

Some of the concerns included diet, employment opportunities, skills and training opportunities, religious rights and privileges, health, and treatment, according to the release. Mr. Potter noted that there were conflicting details between what the prison officials said and what the inmates said.

Mr. Potter, who will again be departing the territory on December 9 to attend the National Association of Insurance Commissioners Fall meeting in Miami, Florida, he will join Mr. Mullgrav at a visit to the Citres County Detention Center, which houses 112 Virgin Islands inmates.

Upon his return, Mr. Potter will issue a public statement outlining details of his collective findings and recommendations regarding his visit to both prison facilities, according to the release. Mr. Potter said he will work closely with Mr. Mullgrav to address the issues of concern regarding the V.I. inmates that are housed on the U.S. mainland.

In accordance with the Revised Organic Act, Senate President Neville James will serve as Acting Lieutenant Governor. Lieutenant Governor Potter will return to the territory on December 17.