

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Plaskett Meets With Congressional Leadership, Administration Officials

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Virgin Islands Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett met with Congressional Leadership and White House Administration Officials this week to discuss a number of issues related to the Virgin Islands, Ms. Plaskett's office announced Wednesday.

Ms. Plaskett, who met with House Speaker Paul Ryan, above, Tuesday, also took the time to discuss the Virgin Islands' current fiscal issues and legislation she and other territorial delegates have introduced in the current Congress that will help correct some of those issues, according to the release.

“My meeting on Tuesday with Speaker Ryan was very productive. The overall objective was to make House leadership privy to the issues affecting our islands as well as the current financial crisis and to clarify the difference between our fiscal situation and that of Puerto Rico. I also stressed my hope to continue being proactive in informing congressional leadership and highlighting legislation that address broader structural fixes for the Virgin Islands and the other insular territories,” she said.

The second-term congresswoman noted in her meeting with the Speaker that, “although the Virgin Islands has a higher debt ratio per capita than Puerto Rico, its bond obligations are well secured from specific pledged and segregated revenue streams.”

Plaskett also stressed the importance of Congress fully and fairly considering its Constitutionally-prescribed responsibilities to the territories.

“In Recent years, Congress has not acted in a proactive manner to exercise its responsibilities established under the Constitution. Funding disparities in the treatment of the Virgin Islands across a range of federal programs, as compared to states, has been a major contributing factor to the financial difficulties facing the Virgin Islands and the territories. I believe there must be a broader discussion that speak to these disparities. There are a number of bills that have been introduced by the territorial representatives—individually, and jointly, —in the last Congress and again in the 115th Congress that, if passed, would address many of these issues,” Ms. Plaskett said.

Ms. Plaskett said that although there is much uncertainty in Washington at the moment, she is eager to work with her colleagues toward the issues impacting the Virgin Islands.