

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp On Cutting His Salary: 'That's Above My Pay Grade'

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ST. THOMAS -- At a press conference held at Government House on this island, where Governor Kenneth Mapp spoke about steps his administration has been taking to offset an over \$100 million structural deficit without laying off or furloughing government employees, Mr. Mapp said he wasn't so sure that he'd be willing to take a pay cut, and suggested that residents should instead work on creating a Constitution for the Virgin Islands, which would include a determination for the pay of the territory's governors.

He also said that such a decision was above his pay grade.

"Well, I don't know if I'm willing to do that," Mr. Mapp said, referring to joining with senators who said they'd cut their salary if the action was across the board.

"Everybody keeps asking me that question and I suspect that that question is driven on symbolism. I don't know what you ought to pay the governor, and I don't know what you ought to pay members of the Legislature, and I would only recommend that go to a Constitutional convention and make that decision as a community," Mr. Mapp said.

Many mainland governors receive much less than their USVI counterpart. The governor of Maine, for example, makes \$70,000 annually. Maine's population is 1.33 million, according to 2014 estimates. That's almost ten times as many people as the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Colorado's governor earns an annual salary of \$90,000. The state has a population of 5.356 million people according to 2014 estimates. In fact, Mr. Mapp's salary matches that of the governor of Texas at \$150,000 annually; Texas being the second-largest state by population in the U.S., with a total of 26,448,193 people.

Mr. Mapp said he came into office and met the salary at \$150,000, adding that that amount was paid to two governors before him -- Charles W. Turnbull and John P. de Jongh. And as if to justify the pay, Mr. Mapp then spoke of the state of the government when he took office, referring to it as broken, and the demanding nature of his job.

"You gave me the most broken, broke government with the most destroyed infrastructure system. I asked for the job, I'm happy to have it. You extract about 16 to 18 hours a day out of me, and you debate with me where I eat, where I sleep, how I ride, and you expect the delivery. And now you happen to say, 'And now I want you to cut your pay.' I don't know what the symbolism of that is, I don't know what the reality of that is, but I thank the good Lord in heaven that that's above my pay grade, and I don't have to take on that responsibility."