

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Only Four Will Travel To Denmark, Centennial Commission Says

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Following [push back](#) from senators making up both the minority and majority caucuses -- with Senators Tregenza Roach and Alicia Hansen [sponsoring a measure](#) aimed at repurposing government funds set aside for the Centennial Commission to be used for youth programs and the territory's hospital instead -- the commission has decided to send only four of its members to Denmark.

The commission had originally intended to send 11 members in June to Denmark after receiving an invitation from the Danish West Indian Society to participate in the events, which will begin on June 7. With the original number of members, the trip would have cost between \$30,000 to \$40,000, with each member being given an allowance of \$5,000

for travel purposes. The trip was first reported by the Virgin Islands Daily News.

But lawmakers became livid after reading media reports and reacted swiftly, with Mr. Roach and Mrs. Hansen issuing a joint statement on the matter.

“I am appalled that with all the pressing needs we have in the territory that the commission would vote to squander public funds in such a way. Even our hospitals are asking support in buying medication to treat our people,” Mrs. Hansen said.

“I joined in this bill because I do not want to be sending our people mixed signals,” Mr. Roach said. “If we are in a financial crisis we ought to act like we are and be more responsible with scarce resources.”

The Majority Caucus chimed in as well: “There are several pressing issues in our community that should take precedence over a trip,” it said through a statement.

The commission revealed at a recent board meeting that it had at its disposal roughly \$128,000 from the Department of Tourism fund, as well as about \$255,000 from the U.S. Department of Interior. Another \$750,000 from D.O.I. could also become available to the commission.

If the \$750,000 were to become available, it would bring the commission’s balance to roughly \$1.13 million. But how the commission would spend the remaining funds remains unclear. According to its website, the commission has one event scheduled for June, the Baja El Sol – “Different Developments” in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas. In July, it lists Emancipation Day as an activity, as well as St. John’s Carnival, although there was no information detailing the commission’s involvement. From July 24-29, the commission lists the St. Croix Archeology Society’s International Association for Caribbean Archaeology Congress as a Centennial event, again giving no details as to the commission’s participation and projected expenditure of funds.

The following months include one activity each: Centennial Storytelling and Folklore on September 2; Centennial Storytelling and Folklore on October 7; Centennial Storytelling and Folklore on November 4; and Centennial closing ceremonies on December 29. There were no activities scheduled for August, [according to the website](#).

Feature Image: Copenhagen City, Denmark.