

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gittens Forging Legislation To Eliminate Salary For Casino Control Commission Commissioners

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Casino Control Commission Office at #3005 Estate Orange Grove, Christiansted (Ernice Gilbert, VIC)

Senator Kenneth's office said Wednesday that Mr. Gittens will introduce a measure to restructure the Casino Control Commission (C.C.C.), to include eliminating salaried positions for commissioners.

The measure, currently being drafted, calls for C.C.C. commissioners to be paid a stipend for their attendance at meetings as opposed to holding full-time salaried positions

at the commission, as they do presently.

"This is an important position and commissioners should be compensated for their efforts, but the current model has not been proven necessary or especially effective," said Mr. Gittens.

According to the senator, commissioners are paid more than \$100,000 annually, plus the added cost of benefits, travel and other perks. Mr. Gittens proposes paying commissioners \$500 per official meeting, not to exceed \$10,000 annually and relying on commission staff to execute day-to-day operations. He said commissioners will retain responsibility for approving all license, registration, certificate, and permit applications. They will also still be responsible for voting on other matters of importance.

The St. Croix senator's proposed bill would also impose new fiscal control requirements on the commission, Mr. Gitten's office said. In addition, the chairman would no longer serve as the agency's chief executive officer. "My proposal does not come solely as a result of recent serious allegations of mismanagement at the Casino Control Commission. This type of alleged mismanagement is just one symptom of an agency that was never structured in a way that made it fully accountable or efficient," Mr. Gittens said.

In July, Anne Golden, the longtime Virgin Islands Casino Control Commission chair, and Stephanie Barnes, a contract worker at the C.C.C., [were charged with a 30-count indictment](#) that alleged theft from programs receiving federal government funds; conspiracy to commit theft from programs receiving government funds; wire fraud; money laundering; forgery; receipt of government property; conversion of government property; fraudulent claims upon the government; and failure to file tax returns.

"The way it is currently set up leaves the room and opportunity for things to be less than ideal." Long term plans for the commission must include placing the Virgin Islands Lottery Office and the gaming aspect of local horse racing under one regulatory authority," said Mr. Gittens.

He added, "The only difference between a video lottery terminal and a slot machine is what we call them. All gambling in the Virgin Islands should be monitored by a single agency.

"My proposal is a step in that direction as removing the salaries from the commissioner positions will eventually allow us to expand and diversify its membership to include those in our community with knowledge of the local lottery system and horse racing."

The senator said when the measure is introduced, he will ask for his colleagues' support in moving the proposal forward. "This is an accountability and cost-saving measure that I believe all the members of this body can find reason to support," he said.