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Senators Criticize Bryan's Debt Refinancing Plan, But They Come Empty-Handed

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**Collage of senators who voted against Governor Bryan's ill-fated debt refinancing deal.
By. VI LEGISLATURE**

Governor Albert Bryan burned a lot of political capital on the [failed debt refinancing attempt](#). But one thing the governor has to be given credit for is his effort to find solutions to address the looming collapse of the Government Employees' Retirement System. G.E.R.S. is projected to crumble by the time Mr. Bryan's first term in office expires, and the fall of the pension system would spell untold disaster for the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Mr. Bryan has forwarded legislation to the Senate for the legalization of marijuana for recreational use, which he contends would result in tax revenues that could be used to bolster GERS. But that

effort was [shut down by the Senate](#), with lawmakers urging the administration to first implement the medicinal marijuana law, which Mr. Bryan himself [signed in January 2019](#).

Though Mr. Bryan's debt refinancing plan received enough votes to push it through the Senate, a number of lawmakers — those who opposed and some who favored it — were critical of the measure.

Among the most vocal were Senators Kurt Violet and Janelle Sarauw, who lambasted the administration and their own colleagues who supported the measure.

The words were harsh. Mr. Violet said some of his colleagues supported the deal because they were compromised. Ms. Sarauw said the territory should not rush into a deal.

Senator Oakland Benta called on God for mercies, and Senator Javan James said he would not gamble with the lives of Virgin Islanders.

Senator Dwayne DeGraff could not get past the fact that the USVI would give up control of the Internal Revenue Matching Fund to a special purpose vehicle.

Senators, your concerns may have been justified; the V.I. Consortium Editorial Board saw the debt refinancing deal as a negative as well.

But where are your plans? Where are your ideas? Stop complaining; and if you don't want to come off as obstructionists, show your hand.