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Vialet Calls on Bryan to Pay Wages Owed to Retirees With \$10 Million Included in 2021 Budget By Lawmakers

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Eurman Fahie, known as Coach Fahie, joined retirees in September last year outside Government House in Christiansted to protest long overdue owed wages. By. VI CONSORTIUM

Senator Kurt Vialet on Tuesday informed government retirees of funding in a line item included in the fiscal year 2021 budget named “New OMB-Retroactive Payment to Retirees Over 65”, which provides \$10 million in funding for wages owed to government retirees over 65.

Mr. Vialet, who chairs the Senate Committee on Finance, said his office has received numerous calls from retirees seeking information on the owed monies. “I must explicitly state that during the

Fiscal Year 2019 budget markup process the members of the 33rd Legislature made sure to include funding for retroactive wages owed to retirees over the age of 65 as the first phase to paying out the Government of the Virgin Islands outstanding liability to the retirees," the senator said.

As such, Mr. Violet is calling on Governor Albert Bryan to honor the commitment made by the 33rd Legislature to the government retirees, according to the release. "The Fiscal Year 2019 revenue collections were in line with the projections; therefore, sufficient funds exist for paying our retirees," Mr. Violet stated.

In addition, the senator said he has submitted an amendment to ensure that funds will remain available until expended. "It is my hope that the Executive Branch will pay the retirees sooner than later. I will continue to support the retirees and will not allow them to be forgotten," Mr. Violet said.

Last year [retirees staged a protest](#) outside Government House in Christiansted calling on the administration to pay the owed wages. At the time, Mr. Bryan said in a release, "I assure you that while our priority is making sure the retirement system remains solvent and that we can continue paying the annuities to the almost 9,000 retirees currently collecting benefits, our administration has also made it a priority to address our legacy bills.

"I want retirees to know that I have not forgotten their service to our government and that I take seriously the commitments made to them. Stabilizing and restoring the trust of the people in their government is one of the priorities of my administration. That means paying taxpayers their income tax refunds, addressing the debt owed to WAPA, and it certainly means addressing the owed retroactive pay to our government retirees."

To date, however, the owed wages have not been paid.