

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Signs Bill Into Law Separating Salary of Senators From Lowest Paid Commissioner's

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VI Legislature building in St. Thomas in May 2015. By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR VI CONSORTIUM

Governor Albert Bryan has signed into law a bill that separates the salary of senators from the lowest paid commissioner's.

Bill No. 33-0423 is an Act amending the Virgin Islands Code relating to the Virgin Islands Compensation Commission, to restrict the Compensation Commission from reducing Senatorial salaries and other expenses below the level existing at the time of the determination, and providing for approval of the Compensation Commission's

recommendations by default for the Legislature's non-action; amending title 2, section 71 to sever senators' salary from that of the lowest annual compensation of the officers itemized in 3 V.I.C. § 29; and providing for the interim retention of the existing salary for members of the Legislature of \$85,000.

The measure quickly moved through the Senate following a controversy that prompted an uproar in the community. Senator Javan James had attempted to move an amendment — [which we've since learned](#) he did not have the authority to move, as he had willingly relinquished authorship of the bill on which he based his amendment — that sought to decouple senators' salary from that of the lowest paid commissioner's.

In approving the bill, Mr. Bryan said, "I must remind the Legislature that Section 20 of the Revised Organic of 1954, as amended, requires the salaries and travel allowances of the members of the Legislature to be paid at rates that are prescribed by the laws of the Virgin Islands. As such, if the recommendations of the Virgin Islands Compensation Commission are approved by "non-action" of the Legislature, subsequent legislative action will be necessary to gain executive branch approval of such rates by forwarding the decision of the Legislature to the Governor and budget such rates prior to any payment to members of the Legislature."