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Resolution to See USVI Residents Getting Tax Refunds Within Weeks of Filing Gains Traction in Congress

Business / **Published On November 21, 2019 06:49 PM /**

Staff Consortium **November 21, 2019**

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A resolution sponsored by Senator Donna Frett-Gregory that calls for U.S. Virgin Islands residents to receive their tax refunds within weeks of filing like their U.S. counterparts, is gaining traction in Congress, according to a release the senator's office issued Thursday.

Unlike other U.S. citizens who can expect to receive tax refunds within weeks of filing, residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands have historically had to wait years for income and child tax refunds.

According to the release, Mrs. Frett-Gregory saw what she described as the "pitifully slow rate" of VI tax return reimbursements as burdensome and unfair to tax payers, and was determined to get to work on this issue. In the beginning of her term, Mrs. Frett-Gregory proposed Resolution No. 1850 to petition the Federal Government to subsidize earned income and child tax refunds for Virgin Islands residents.

The resolution was unanimously supported and approved by the 33rd Legislature and the Governor of the Virgin Islands, and has been wholeheartedly supported by Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett—who has supported the measure by introducing contents of the resolution on the congressional level as HR 410, according to the release.

HR 410 recently gained support from other members of the U.S. Congress and has since been incorporated into HR 3300, a bill that seeks to provide subsidies to not only the U.S. Virgin Islands, but to all U.S. territories. This legislative measure was recently voted out of the Committee on Ways and Means, chaired by Congressman Richard Neal, and is making its way to the House floor for consideration.

If the bill passes the congressional floor and the Senate successfully, the possibility of a federal subsidy on earned income and child tax credits will become a close reality for Virgin Islanders, and will provide the VI Government with financial support to begin the process of timelier tax refund payments, said Mrs. Frett-Gregory.

"Tax returns have been a vexing issue for many years and have placed added burden on Virgin Islanders who have already suffered so much since the storms," she said. "Some may say it's a long shot, but passage of this tax subsidy would ease the VI Government's overall tax obligation, financially relieve VI taxpayers and put more money into the VI economy. I see this as a win-win."

She added, "The first step toward relief is to ask. If this measure is approved, it will be a milestone moment for the Territory and for the people of the US Virgin Islands".