

The Virgin Islands Consortium

As the IRS Reels Under Pressure to Process Tax Returns, Bryan's Record-Setting Refund Releases Come Into Focus

Government / **Published On July 06, 2021 06:48 AM /**

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Finance Commissioner Nominee Bosede Bruce packs refund checks in vehicle ready for delivery to Virgin Islanders. By. GOV'T HOUSE

The Internal Revenue Service is under pressure for failing to process millions of tax returns, with U.S. media outlets piling on the pressure, including a Washington Post piece titled, ["The IRS is a Hot Mess"](#).

According to the Post, the IRS has given up on answering every taxpayer phone call even as millions of Americans are trying to settle issues with past tax returns, and as

millions wait for tax refunds.

And according to [the Wall Street Journal](#), citing a new report, the IRS ended the tax-filing season with 35.3 million unprocessed tax returns, more than four times what it had during the last pre-pandemic filing season in 2019.

Governor Albert Bryan told the Consortium Monday that the territory's progress should be highlighted for setting a new record in refunds issued to taxpayers, even as the USVI also faced an unprecedented challenge to issue well over \$220 million in Covid-related stimulus payments.

"We would love to have our progress" highlighted in light of the Internal Revenue Service's own shortcomings, said the governor. "We are almost paid up on all outstanding tax returns."

[Last week](#), Mr. Bryan said his administration would issue \$25 million in tax refunds in two weeks. The administration has been making good on its promise by delivering 7,395 income tax refund checks totaling \$15 million on Thursday, as the first of two mailings of the \$25 million in tax checks. Thursday's refunds addressed most filings for tax year 2018 and for those who recently filed their 2016 and 2017 income taxes, according to Gov't House.

According to the administration, with this week's upcoming mailing, the government will have issued approximately \$156.4 million of income tax refunds since Mr. Bryan took office in January 2019:

- \$29.2 million in the Fiscal Year 2019 months the Bryan-Roach Administration was in office
- \$68.7 million in FY 2020
- \$56.4 million in FY 2021 including the two new distributions

The territory's chief executive said that after the upcoming refunds have been paid, his administration will have set a Virgin Islands record. "As we issue that, the Bryan-Roach administration have actually issued more than \$155 million in tax returns, another Virgin Islands record," he said.

He also mentioned that the government had issued \$226 million in total stimulus payments. "We are paying down the long-standing obligations of the government and we are starting to pay what is owed to the people for years and years," stated the governor.

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