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Bryan Orders Education to Hire Outside Investigator in C.A.H.S. Coach's Children Abuse Matter; Feds File 13 Criminal Counts

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Alfredo Bruce Smith By. **FACEBOOK**

Governor Albert Bryan said Monday that he has called on the V.I. Dept. of Education to hire an outside investigator to probe the scope of the alleged abuse of minor boys matter involving Alfredo Bruce Smith, the 50-year-old Charlotte Amalie High School monitor and coach who has been accused of raping children during his 15-year employment at the school.

Responding to a Consortium query seeking an update on the Dept. of Education's investigation, the governor said not only has he ordered D.O.E. to retain an outside investigator, he has also called on the department to broaden its own internal examination to include all the territory's

schools. He said D.O.E. was "actually in the process of getting an outside investigator for this" upon his request.

"My concern here is who knew and who didn't know. My concern is not only for Charlotte Amalie and that particular high school, my concern is going back and looking at how many of these incidents that we've had where wrongdoings of sexual [and] abusive nature of our children were actually reported," Mr. Bryan said.

Mr. Bryan's announcement came the same day as federal prosecutors' new filing in the District Court alleging that the timeline of Smith's abuse of minor boys spanned as many as 13 of the 15 years he has been employed at D.O.E., with the number of boys suspected to be abused growing to "dozens."

The new filing indicates an investigation that has grown vast, with large amounts of data being compiled from Facebook (more than 1,000 images and more than 300 videos) along with five cellphones with more videos, images and communication, some of which are suspected to include child pornography and "dozens of potential minor victims," according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Natasha Baker, who filed a motion on Monday asking for more time.

Along with securing an outside investigator, Governor Bryan said he has asked D.O.E. Commissioner Racquel Berry Benjamin "to create an audit of sorts to find out is the protocol we have working, [and] how can we make it stronger. Not only for [the Charlotte Amalie High School] but all our schools so this is going to be a little in depth," he said.

In the Monday filing, Ms. Baker announced 13 charges against Smith, including counts of coercion, rape, one count of transportation of a child to engage in criminal sexual activity, and two counts sexual exploitation of a child.

The Consortium was told by two well-placed sources that some current Dept. of Education officials were part of a meeting between C.A.H.S. leadership and D.O.E. STT-STJ District officials held during the prior government administration where concerns regarding Smith were discussed. However, it was ultimately decided that Smith would continue his employment at C.A.H.S. He is currently on leave without pay pending the outcome of the investigation and federal case.

Asked by the Consortium about the matter, the governor said, "As far as any specific encounter with Mr. Smith, I'm sure that's under the review of the U.S. Justice Department, the U.S. Attorney's Office as well, but right now what we're trying to do is get down to what happened, who was involved and most importantly how we could make sure that this never, ever happens again."

He added, "At this point we have no evidence of criminal activity, but I do want a complete audit of the system to make sure that all our schools have the resources that they need and have the reporting mechanism that works... We hear a lot of things in the community anecdotally and anything people send to me I take seriously, because the first thing they're going to say is, 'I told the governor.' I want to know we have a real reporting system. Just like sexual harassment in the workplace, once you notify a supervisor of something... there must be an action."

The V.I. District Court [on September 1](#) announced the arrest of Smith for the molestation of multiple minor boys over the years of his employment at the V.I. Dept. of Education. Baker filed documents in the District Court in early September that stated C.A.H.S. administrators were made aware of the rape incidents since 2019 — gruesome sexual violations that allege, among other

crimes, that Smith raped and used a penis pump on some of the minor victims. Smith continued working at C.A.H.S. for more than a year and to this day remains on leave.

On Monday, Attorney Baker called for more time to build the case, pointing to the high volume of new evidence that she said federal prosecutors were working "diligently to comb through," according to the filing. In most cases, defendants under the Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and their individual state constitutions have a right to a speedy trial, and Smith's federally-provided public defender said Smith was unwilling to waive this right, according to a response filed to the motion of Ms. Baker. A ruling has not been made.