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Donna Christensen Opposes Bill Mandating Transparency and Oversight of Federal Covid Relief Funds

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I, who have long and painfully established my accountability and transparency creds, am writing in opposition to Bill No. 34-0073, the so called [“Transparency “ bill.](#)

First, it appears to be based on the mis-assumption that there is a need for the Legislature to legislate to the co-equal executive branch their “demand that the individuals elected to represent the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands work collaboratively for the betterment of all of us”.

Second, the Legislature already has the oversight authority to call officers of the executive branch to be updated on all spending as well as other executive actions and activities.

Third, there is already strict regulation, oversight and reporting of the expenditures at the local and most importantly by the federal government which awarded the funds.

Fourth, I see no reason why the quarterly reports to the Treasury and any others, which are likely public, cannot be accessed, or even requested, by our Senators.

Fifth, this administration has been transparent and accountable — and collaborative — far more than most previous ones. In fact I read that the Senate President reported that the governor actually reached out for input on what appears to be the immediate impetus for this bill. To me that was an invitation to collaborate. Who dropped that ball?

Sixth, despite the protestations, insisting on legislative approval of spending of federal funding released to governors WOULD usurp the authority of the executive branch. The federal government which awarded the funds is already regulating, monitoring and strictly overseeing its spending.

Therefore, the legislation is an unnecessary piece of paper. The Legislature's oversight authority is already there. No need to grandstand, just use it!

Submitted Dec. 12 by: *former Delegate to Congress and gubernatorial candidate Donna Christensen.*