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Governor Bryan Announces Plan to Pay \$25 Million in Retroactive Wages Every Year Until Debt is Cleared

Government / **Published On January 25, 2022 04:16 AM /**

Linda Straker **January 25, 2022**

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Governor Albert Bryan announced Monday night that his administration has put together a plan that will pay the government's outstanding debt in retroactive wages to former and present employees dating back to 1990.

"Director Nominee Cindy Richardson and the Division of Personnel maintain a consistent calculation of what is owed in retroactive wages to present and former employees. This is for salary increases that were promised but never paid. These debts date back more than 30 years to 1990," said the governor as he delivered the State of the Territory address on Monday evening, the final of his first term in office.

“This evening, after consulting with Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory and Vice President Novelle Francis, we are committing to paying down at least 15 percent or approximately \$26 million in retroactive wages in the current fiscal year,” Mr. Bryan announced. In 2015, the Office of Collective Bargaining [told lawmakers](#) that over \$300 million in retroactive wages was owed to government employees both past and present. The payments date back to 1989, the OCB said at the time.

Forty-five million dollars in retroactive payments was paid during the John P. de Jongh administration.

“I am also proposing that we commit to a plan to pay the remaining balance of what is owed in annual installments of \$25 million each fiscal year until the full obligation is repaid,” Mr. Bryan said while disclosing that the Fiscal Year 2023 Executive Budget he will submit to the Senate in May will include an appropriation in keeping with this plan.

Speaking directly to members of the Legislature, the governor said his administration will need Legislative action to make good on the retroactive payout commitment, and so he asked for their support in this endeavor.

“Senators, I am sure we all agree that taking care of those public servants who have been waiting on their government to make them whole for over three decades is a worthwhile challenge. Let us make this the year that we not only solve the pension crisis at GERS, but also commit to a sustainable plan for the repayment of the retroactive wages owed to our retirees. The financial security of our seniors is of utmost importance to our administration,” he pleaded.

Mr. Bryan further disclosed that his administration will also invest in the health, housing, recreation, and overall quality of life for citizens in the territory using different avenues. “To further our commitment to that agenda, we will be reconstituting the membership of the Commission on Aging this year. I look forward to working with the commission to ensure the needs of our elders are properly addressed,” he said.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Bryan reminded the Legislature that when his administration took office, they understood that they could not tackle the myriad of issues that confronted the territory all at once, and priorities were established.

“Our administration decided to place priority on the repayment of income tax refunds because it represented the greatest number of people owed by this government. We spent the last three years reducing the backlog of refunds owed to taxpayers,” he said.

“Now that we are beginning to see the [light at the end of the tunnel on GERS](#), we can shift our focus to yet another longstanding obligation of this government, the payment of retroactive wages,” he said.