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Members of Commission to Set Pay Recommendations For Public Officials Announced; First Report Due in May

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Nine people have been appointed to serve as members of the V.I. Public Officials Compensation Commission in accordance with Title 3, Chapter 25, Section 542 of the Virgin Islands Code, Government House has announced.

The law invoking the commission was enacted following the 2020 passage of a [controversial measure](#) that untied the lowest paid commissioner's salary — the commissioner of the Dept. of Sports, Parks and Recreation — from the compensation of senators. Sparking the controversy was Governor Albert Bryan's inclusion in his budget a salary of \$100,000 for the DSPR commissioner. Senators are currently compensated \$85,000 per annum.

Aside from the decoupling of salaries, the law, now [Act No. 8384](#), also invokes [Act 7878](#), "The Virgin Islands Public Officials Compensation Commission Act", and directs the governor, the president of the Legislature, and the chief justice of the V.I. Supreme Court each to appoint three members to the commission.

On Thursday, Government House issued a release stating, "Act. No. 7878 amended in Act. No. 8384 stipulates that the Governor shall convene a Commission to conduct a review of the salaries, expenses, allowances, and other emoluments of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, members of the Governor's Cabinet, including the Attorney General and all Commissioners and Directors of Government agencies; Judicial Officers; Senators of the Legislature; and the Inspector General of the Virgin Islands to determine and provide pay levels appropriate for the duties and responsibilities of the respective offices and positions."

Mr. Bryan said, "In a globally competitive economy, it is imperative that we regularly assess our compensation offerings to keep our best and brightest here in public service. The formation of this commission is a meaningful step in the right direction toward bringing some resolve to this longstanding issue."

Three people were nominated by the president of the Legislature; three were nominated by the chief justice of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands, and three were nominated by the governor for a term of four years each, as per the law's demands. The Gov't House release did not reveal commission members chosen by the leader of each branch of government.

Commission members are:

- Dr. Haldane Davies, Chairman
- Ms. Melonie Gomez, Vice Chairwoman
- Ms. Asiah Clendenin-Gumbs, Secretary
- Attorney Joel Holt
- Attorney Henry Smock
- Kenneth Hermon
- Dr. Valdemar Hill Jr.
- Edward Thomas
- Frank Abednego

Gov't House said the commission will conduct a compensation review and study for the specified positions, engage in research relevant to the exercise, conduct interviews with position holders, and convene public hearings. A final report with recommended pay levels will be due to the governor, chief justice, Senate president, and the public on or before May 31, 2022.