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Bryan Increases Retro Pay to Gov't Employees From \$25 Million to \$40 Million, A Monumental Step to Come Current on Long Owed Debt

Exclusive / **Published On August 15, 2022 09:59 AM /**

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Governor Albert Bryan, Jr. By. REEMY-REEMZ PHOTOGRAPHY/VICONSORTIUM

Governor Albert Bryan on Monday resubmitted legislation to the 34th Legislature increasing the payout to government employees both past and present owed retroactive wages by the government of the Virgin Islands.

Mr. Bryan, in a transmittal letter to Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory obtained by the Consortium, said since his previous submission on July 12 committing to pay \$25 million, "in working with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, we have been able to allocate additional funds for the debt owed to the current and retired employees who are owed retroactive

pay."

The letter adds, "As such, in accordance with Section 11 of the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands of 1954, as amended, I re-submit to the Thirty-Fourth Legislature the enclosed proposed measure appropriating a total of \$40 million in the Fiscal Year ending September 2022, from the General Fund, to pay retroactive wages owed to the employees and retirees of the Government of the Virgin Islands."

The governor has asked the Senate president to bring the measure before the 34th Legislature at the next Senate session, according to the letter. Senators Novelle Francis and Ms. Frett-Gregory were also instrumental in crafting the latest legislation, the Consortium has learned.

The announcement represents the fulfillment of a major commitment, one that government employees past and present have long called for, and one that has not been addressed for at least 8 years. Mr. Bryan has also committed to paying the full amount — roughly \$175 million — through annual installments until the debt is cleared. For perspective, the last payments were made during the John P. de Jongh Administration, which paid \$45 million. In June, [\\$7.7 million of the current administration's commitment was paid](#), and the \$40 million will bring total payments under Governor Bryan to \$50 million by the end of 2022.

The governor first announced his plan to pay the retroactive wages [during his last State of the Territory Address in January](#), when he announced that \$25 million would be the first installment. "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," Mr. Bryan said at the time. "The financial security of our seniors is of utmost importance to our administration."