



THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

**Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802
340-774-0001**

February 19, 2016

Hon. Neville James
Senate President
31st Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Capitol Building
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00802

**Re: Proposed Bill Amending Act No. 7758 to Provide for Additional
Appropriations from the General Fund**

Dear Mr. President:

Enclosed for review and further action, is a proposed bill amending Act No. 7758, to appropriate an additional \$2,469,363 to the Bureau of Corrections, \$2,238,353 to the Bureau of Internal Revenue, \$575,077 to the Division of Personnel, \$1,131,353 to the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, \$1,241,032 to the Virgin Islands Fire Service, \$3,526,739 to the Department of Human Services, \$275,860 to the Department of Licensing & Consumer Affairs, \$2,176,283 to the Virgin Islands Police Department, \$9,978,575 to the Department of Education for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and \$550,000 to the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016 for operating expenses from the general fund to the V.I. Taxi Cab Commission and for the implementation of mandatory continuing education for taxi and tour operators as a condition for license renewal.

Included in the funding for the Department of Education is \$5,585,081 for step increases, and \$1,600,000 to help fund the substitute pool, for a total amendment of 7,185,081 in the personnel & fringe category. Additionally, \$2,230,000 to fund the projected shortfall of the school lunch program, \$300,000 to cover additional supplies for the school meal program, and \$263,494 to reimburse the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Services. The bill also provides for an appropriation in the sum of \$125,000 from the JROTC Fund to cover costs associated with the renewal of the JROTC program at the St. Croix Educational Complex, and \$600,000.00 from the Education Initiative Fund for a Literacy and Mathematics K-3 Intervention program.

The bill further requests additional appropriations to implement step increases for nine of the first eleven agencies whose paperwork has been verified by the Division of Personnel. The Department of Finance and the Department of Agriculture were able to accommodate their step increases within their existing FY16 budget. It is the administration's desire to have these increases implemented by the last pay date in March so that we can continue to bring much needed relief to government employees many of whom have not seen increases in many years. We will continue to work to address step increases for other departments, and once we have completed that process, additional requests for appropriations to meet those obligations will be forwarded to the Legislature for its consideration and action.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that the Legislature take immediate action on this bill and give it favorable consideration so that the Territory can continue to honor its obligations to the employees of this Government who have been ignored for far too long.

As usual, members of the administration will be made available to testify on this submission.

Sincerely,



Osbert E. Potter
Acting Governor
Enclosure