



THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

CLAUDE EARL WALKER, ESQUIRE
ATTORNEY GENERAL

March 22, 2016

Eugene Irish
Vice President
Seafarers International Union
United Shopping Plaza, Bay #24
Christiansted, St. Croix, VI 00820

Re: Correction Officers Agreement – Bureau of Corrections

Dear Mr. Irish:

On or about August 31, 2012, the Territory of the Virgin Islands, on behalf of the Bureau of Corrections and its operations of the Golden Grove Adult Correctional Facility and Detention Center, entered into a Settlement Agreement with the United States of America, through its United States Department of Justice. As part of this Agreement, the Bureau of Corrections is required to develop and implement staffing plan which will serve to improve its recruitment and retention efforts.

Over the years, adequate compensation for Correction Officers has been identified as a major impediment to attracting and retaining individuals at the Bureau. In an effort to begin addressing the staffing issues, Governor Kenneth L. Mapp, on February 24, 2016, submitted Bill No. 31-0320 to the 31st Legislature of the Virgin Islands, requesting that an additional \$2,469,363.00 be appropriated from the General Fund to the Bureau of Corrections. These funds will be used to implement salary increases for employees of the Bureau of Correction, thereby placing them on the proper salary steps, in accordance with the current bargaining agreement. Additionally, the Governor has publicly expressed his belief that a starting salary of \$24,500.00 for a Correction Officer is too low. Likewise, the Independent Monitor overseeing compliance with the Settlement Agreement has identified the staffing issue at Golden Grove as an “emergency”. Therefore, given that the time is ripe for negotiations on a new collective bargaining agreement for the employees at the Bureau of Corrections, it is evident that all parties are presented with a unique opportunity to properly address the persistent concerns about an appropriate level of parity between the salaries for correction officers and other law enforcement personnel.

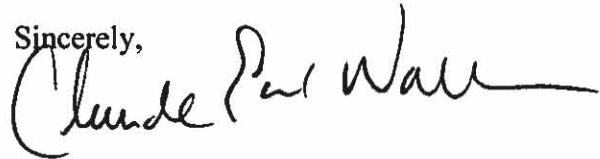
It is my clear understanding that there has been some preliminary communications between your organization and the new Director of the Office of Collective Bargaining. I anticipate and support the conclusion that the negotiation process must be placed on a fast track. I also expect that adequate and acceptable compensation for the correction officers at the Bureau

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of Corrections will be addressed in relation to the Territory's desire to expeditiously satisfy the terms and conditions of the Settlement Agreement.

In light of the initial financial moves by the Governor, coupled with his intention to demolish and to rebuild some of the housing and related structures at the Golden Grove Facility, the time is now to further accelerate compliance with, and fulfillment of the terms of the Settlement Agreement, and to arrive at a place where the Bureau of Corrections actively protects the constitutional rights of all individuals in its custody. The Attorney General of the Virgin Islands, as a signatory to the Settlement Agreement, remains committed to assuring that all is done for the best interest of the Territory and People of the Virgin Islands. To this end, you may feel free to contact me if you have any concerns or suggestions as to how we can move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Claude Earl Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Claude Earl Walker, Esquire
Attorney General