



STEVEN VAN BEVERHOUDT
V.I. INSPECTOR GENERAL

GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE V. I. INSPECTOR GENERAL

2315 Kronprindsens Gade #75, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, V. I. 00802-6468
100 Lagoon Complex, Suite 8, Frederiksted, St. Croix, V. I. 00840-3912

Tel: (340) 774-3388 STT
(340) 778-9012 STX
Fax: (340) 774-6431 STT
(340) 773-2501 STX

COMMENT ON BILL 31-0150

Good morning Senator Kenneth Gittens, Chairman of the Committee of Rules & Judiciary, other members of the Committee, other senators, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Steven van Beverhoudt. I am the Virgin Islands Inspector General. I am here this morning at your request to comment on Bill 31-0150, an Act to amend Title 3 Chapter 25 of the Virgin Islands Code.

My comments will be very brief. The bill provides for the forfeiture of retirement benefits for elected and appointed officials upon the conviction of specific felonies. I understand the intent of the bill and I applaud the sponsor for the desire to hold wrongdoers accountable for their offenses. However, I have two basic concerns with the bill as proposed. First, why is it limited to only elected and appointed officials? Other employees of the Government can commit the same felonies that are the basis of this bill. As an example the former Deputy Chief of Staff was convicted for the embezzlement of about \$1 million. If this bill was the law at the time, would he have been affected by the provisions?

Second, an embezzlement of \$101 or more is considered a felony. Should a 30 plus-year employee, who may have been caught for a \$101 embezzlement, lose

their entire pension. Then, without any income, does that person now become a burden on society? Shouldn't the statute require that the retirement contributions be used for restitution and to assist in the cost of care while the person is incarcerated, but once released shouldn't the remaining reduced pension be released to the person?

Again, I applaud the sponsor of the legislation; however, I present my concerns for consideration.

I thank you for the opportunity to comment on Bill 31-0150.