



LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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**ADLAH "FONCIE"
DONASTORG**
Senator, 28th Legislature

Member, Committees on:

*Financial Services,
Infrastructure and Consumer
Affairs*

*Housing, Sports
and Veterans Affairs*

*Planning and
Environmental Protection*

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Donastorg says publically financed improvements to officials' private residences sets a "terrible precedent"

ST. THOMAS – Senator Adlah "Foncie" Donastorg said Tuesday he has complied with a Government House request that he bring his concerns about improvements made to the Governor's private residence to the "proper authorities".

"In a statement from Government House I was urged to contact the attorney general and the inspector general and I have done so," Donastorg said. "Yesterday I forwarded correspondence to the office of U.S. Attorney Paul Murphy and to the local office of the U.S. Inspector General."

In his letter to the U.S. Attorney's Office Donastorg wrote, "It is my understanding that a great deal of public funding has been allocated via the Public Finance Authority and other sources for improvements to Governor de Jongh's personal residence. These expenditures set a terrible precedent that must be addressed. These home renovations represent de facto compensation to the Governor as he is certain to realize increased profits on the sale of his much improved home. The question is twofold – where do we draw the line and has this line yet been crossed? Evidence suggests an abuse of public funds, but at the very least some permanent guidelines must be established for any future requests submitted by sitting Governors."

Donastorg said that there are no legal provisions for improvements to be made to any Governor's private residence.

"Tax payers should not be asked to subsidize anything aside from very basic security improvements at the Governor's private home," the senator said. "In fact, many would argue that no public funds whatsoever should be utilized to make improvements on a private residence."

Donastorg said that the Organic Act dictates that "the Governor shall maintain his official residence in the Government House", but that Estate Catherineberg on Denmark Hill had also been made available and secure for the Governor and his family.

"There is no doubt that the Governor is entitled to some level of additional security," Donastorg said. "But as I asked, where do we draw the line? Will the next Governor ask us to build him an entirely new home? We are in what has been described as a fiscal crisis and our schools lack basic supplies and sanitation – how can we justify spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a private home?"

Donastorg said there were also conflict of interest concerns about the expenditures at the Governor's House given that many of the improvements were funded by the Public Finance Authority, which is chaired by the Governor himself.