



LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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**ADLAH "FONCIE"
DONASTORG**

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Legislature votes to subpoena records on Governor's private residence Administration attempted to legitimize questionable expenditures after the fact

ST. THOMAS – On Monday Senator Adlah "Foncie" Donastorg led the charge for a subpoena of all documents relative to public funds being utilized for improvements to Governor John deJongh's personal residence on St. Thomas.

Members of the 28th Legislature's Committee on Financial Services, Infrastructure & Consumer Affairs voted in favor of Donastorg's motion to subpoena records to include bids, bid schedules, contracts and supplemental contracts related to repairs to deJongh's Estate Mafolie home.

"I would like to thank my colleagues for supporting this measure," Donastorg said.

Donastorg said that the subpoena came on the heels of the revelation that monies were reprogrammed from the \$1.3 million Nadir Bridge Flood Control Project to fund the improvements to de Jongh's home.

"The Administration did not have authorization to do this," Donastorg said. "Moreover, the Bridge in Nadir is still going nowhere and flooding remains an issue. The residents could be in jeopardy in the event of heavy rains, yet the Governor's new access road has long since been paved and paid for with some of the funds meant to protect life and property in Nadir."

On Tuesday Donastorg wrote de Jongh requesting that he apologize to the people of the Virgin Islands.

"On June 22 of this year, you issued a statement that there was "absolutely no truth" to allegations that public funds were spent on improvements on your private home," Donastorg wrote. "You have now so far acknowledged that well over \$330,000 was spent at your personal residence, however, you have yet to account for other expenditures, to include the supplemental contracts for additional work performed at your property. I still await this documentation from your Administration. It is time that we put this matter to rest and that you come forward with all the facts at hand so that we may move ahead with the people's business. This issue simply will not go away without a full accounting and investigation. I urge you to fully comply with the Legislature's official inquiry and subpoenas."

Donastorg also told the Governor that the reprogramming of the funds was likely illegal despite the Administration's attempts to justify it otherwise.

"In April of 2008 the Public Finance Authority notified Commissioner of Property & Procurement Lynn Millin that funds had been "reprogrammed" for the "Security Booth & Road Improvements at the Governor's Residence" under Act No. 6917. On further research, I learned that Act 6917 did not specifically allow for improvements to your property, but for design and repair of our roads."

Donastorg said that the Legislature never authorized spending at the Governor's private residence and that it was quite misleading to call the fully equipped guardhouse cottage a "security booth".

"Further, I have evidence that there were efforts to legitimize expenditures after the fact," Donastorg said. "I am not sure if you would call this a cover up, but I find it very strange that a 'notice to proceed' was issued by Public Works on October 11, 2007 for the driveway work at the Governor's private residence and seven months later in April of 2008 there was a letter from the PFA indicating that funds had been made available for the driveway and so called 'security booth' project."

The senator said that the excessive spending could not be considered simply a perk of the office.

"We are talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on essentially upgrading a private home," Donastorg said. "We are a community in crisis in many ways and it is sadly ironic that we don't have money and manpower for crime prevention measures, while the Governor is protected by a \$100,000 fence, armed guards and an extensive security system."

The Senator promised to keep the public informed.

"I hope that with the subpoena issued there will be no further efforts to impede this official inquiry," Donastorg said.