



**District 9**

**Daniel Flippo**  
District Director

**James Carvin**  
Assistant to the Director

June 30, 2011

Governor John deJongh, Jr.  
21-22 Kongens Gade  
Charlotte Amalie  
St. Thomas, USVI 00802

Dear Governor deJongh:

On behalf of more than 1500 members of the United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union (USW) employed by the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands, the USW, as part of its representation of public employees, has sixteen (16) collective bargaining agreements with the Government. We represent employees in all areas of the government, including the police department, the Departments of Finance, Agriculture and Tourism, Bureau of Motor Vehicles, and many others.

I am writing to address the far reaching and potentially illegal action by the Senate in passage of the Virgin Islands Economic Stability Act of 2011. We also oppose your recent action in signing this piece of legislation into law.

It is our position the government's action violates Chapter 25, Section 532 of the statute, which provides that employees with one or more years of service shall be dismissed without prejudice and given the right to reemployment. The Bill of Rights contained in Section 3 of the Revised Organic Act further provides that no law shall be enacted that deprives any person of life, liberty or property without due process. Further, no law shall be enacted that impairs the obligations of contract.

The Economic Stability Act deprives most government workers of 8% of their salary, wages which are contractually negotiated between the Government and the United Steelworkers, as well as other unions. This would be in addition to the 10% of wage increases that have been agreed to by the parties but have not been paid. An additional 8% would result in an 18% reduction for USW members. Regardless of the legality of the 8% reduction contained within the VIESA of 2011, clearly a total of 18% would be not only illegal but immoral. It cannot be denied that this law directly impairs the legal obligations and rights afforded those public servants with regard to layoff and dismissals as contained in the collective bargaining agreements.

I am compelled to remind you that USW members already made significant sacrifices, giving up contractually guaranteed wage increases from 2005 through 2009. In addition, the USW and Office of Collective Bargaining have binding and enforceable contracts in place that provide for salary increases in 2011 and 2012 for USW Local 8248, 8249 and 8677 members. This act requires employees with over 30 years of service to make additional contributions to their retirement, taking an additional 3% from those dedicated employees, for an 11% total reduction in their wages.

Sincerely,

Daniel Flippo  
District 9 Director

RDF:mdj

c: James Carvin  
Gerard Jackson

**United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union**

919 Sharit Avenue, Suite 213, Gardendale, AL 35071 • 205-631-0137 • 205-631-0138 (Fax) • [www.usw.org](http://www.usw.org)

