



**Government of
The United States Virgin Islands
OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT PERSON: Director Patrick Farrell
340-774-VETS (8387)

5 June 2020

**Clarification of Statement Made by
the Honorable Senator Donna Frett-Gregory**

The Honorable Senator Donna Frett-Gregory on June 5, 2020, made a statement as part of the finance committee meeting which requires immediate clarification.

After asking for a point of personal privilege the senator stated “I think it’s time that we require the leader, Mr. Patrick Farrell of the Veterans Affairs, to establish a policy to address the Veterans that have to travel off-island”. Senator Frett Gregory went on to say, “If the policies are established then we can look at if the cost to travel to Puerto Rico is fifty dollars and the cost to travel to the mainland is ah hundred then we give them the difference. But we need to establish what that policy is, I think that’s missing; and we had that conversation with him before”. The senator further went on to say “It’s time that we require him to establish that policy so we can know exactly what it is cause I don’t want for anyone to believe that any of us in this body is not in support of the Veterans. Once we put the respective policies in place then the Veterans would be clear on what you can and cannot do”, said Senator Frett-Gregory.

Senator Frett Gregory is correct about having a prior conversation on this matter. The recommendations given by Senator Frett-Gregory and other Senators to create a policy were accepted. This would be a policy that would financially assist eligible Veterans who elect to travel to their VA Medical facility of choice for medical care. This policy is available on the website of our agency, <https://veterans.vi.gov>. I also host a weekly radio show which provides this type of information to our Veterans. If I may add, Senator Thomas and Senator Hodge, who are Veterans themselves, are aware of this policy. Important to note, Veterans are reimbursed 100% of what they pay for their plane ticket by the VI Office of Veterans Affairs when traveling for medical appointments to the VA Med Center in San Juan.

I was virtually present in the meeting when it was stated that the Office of Veterans Affairs did not have a policy in place for the matter at hand. It was very disappointing that I was not allowed to respond and publicly share the availability of this policy. I find that to be very unfair. As professionals we must find a better way to deal with each other versus tearing down each other’s character; we must cease from this type of behavior, said Director Farrell.

For more information please reach out to the VI Office of Veterans Affairs at (340) 774-8387 or (340) 773-8387.

P
R
E
S
S

R
E
L
E
A
S
E