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Governor Bryan Signs Bill Allowing First Responders To Get Paid Administrative Leave in Medical Pandemics

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – Governor Albert Bryan Jr. has signed into law Bill No. 33-0341, amending the V.I. Code regarding the authorization of administrative leave during medical pandemics or medical states of emergency.

ACT 8327 grants up to 80 hours of administrative leave with pay for certain government employees who are being quarantined or whose health may be affected by the immediate medical pandemic.

A new section (590c) of Title 3, Chapter 25, Subchapter VI reads:

"Whenever the Territory of the Virgin Islands is facing a medical pandemic, or a medical state of emergency is declared by the Governor of the Virgin Islands, all personnel of the Government of the Virgin Islands, including personnel of authorities, independent boards, agencies and other instrumentalities of the Government of the Virgin Islands, who are first responders or medical personnel, inclusive of support staff, in addition to any accrued leave, are entitled to administrative leave with pay for up to eighty hours if they are unable to work in their respective areas or from home due to:

1) showing symptoms and requiring diagnosis;
2) being quarantined by the Government of the Virgin Islands or a healthcare provider;
3) experiencing conditions substantially similar to the immediate medical pandemic or medical state of emergency;

4) experiences acute health issues or discomfort that appears to be linked to the time spent in employees' place of employment, but no specific illness or cause can be determined, or;
5) has any exacerbation of a confirmed pre-existing condition."

The new section of the V.I. Code applies only during the medical pandemic or territorial state of emergency.

"During a State of Emergency, first responders sacrifice their time with loved ones and their recreational time while risking their own health and well-being to continue to assist and support the community," Governor Bryan wrote in his transmittal letter to Senate President Novelle Francis Jr. "Often times, first responders are also affected by the conditions of a State of Emergency but continue to serve while compromising themselves. This Act recognizes that even our first responders, often our heroes, also need support in times of emergency."

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