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Draft National Ordinance amending the vacation and exemption from service regulations to change the amount of vacation allowance, and the way future changes to the amount of vacation allowance will be implemented, and the granting of one day of leave upon reaching the 45th anniversary of service

**Report
No. 5**

Parliament, in its meeting of the Central Committee, has exchanged views with the Government on the draft National Ordinance amending the vacation and exemption from service regulations to change the amount of vacation allowance and the way future changes to the amount of vacation allowance will be implemented and the granting of one day of leave upon reaching the 45th anniversary of service.

Parliament considers the present draft to be adequately prepared when the questions below are answered in time for the public meeting so that the draft can be discussed in the Public meeting.

The **National Alliance-faction** has taken note of the draft and mentions that it is aware that it is something the Prime Minister and ministry has picked up and continued on, and that the ministry brought their own alterations to take it to the next level. The faction appreciates that. The faction queries if someone has to work 45 years just to get one day off, legally. Is there a specific reason why it's just one day? The faction believes that if someone worked 45 years for one particular entity, they are due to more than one day. Were there options explored into extending that one particular item?

The faction continues and mentions the two months' salary for 45 years. The faction understood that in the previous version it was

one month, and it was brought to two. What were the arguments or the things explored to come to any particular number? Is there a particular reason why it's two particular months, and before one month?

The faction mentions that last year, some individuals around, the month July and August, had their 25th jubilee and they have yet to receive any type of funds or anything pertaining to that. Seeing that it's almost a year ago, the faction would like to know the status on Jubilees from 2024.

The faction mentions that the 45 years was presented by government. The faction recollects that the unions wanted it at 40 years, but government put it to 45. The former government also said that if you reach the years of 45 working for any entity, that is more than double your life working for that entity, you deserve more. It was decided to double the pay, but the faction remembers that the amount of days was also increased. The faction doesn't know if that was removed. The faction also remembers advising to make sure that we have more days, and that is not given in this presentation. Was that removed, and why?

The faction continues and mentions once again the pay of jubilees. A lot of civil servants are requesting their payment of jubilees. Even one at the 15 years that made it in 2023 and was told it can't be paid because of this legislation. The faction would like to know how does the government, that already set precedent, paid vacation pay last year. Will the jubilees be paid of the same year that the vacation pay was paid? Why pay vacation pay without a legal basis, but say I am going to leave out the jubilees?

The faction continues and reiterates that what it believes is happening is that the milestones for the jubilees are being adjusted, and some new milestones are being added. The question was more in reference to the prior existing jubilees as it being the 25th year, that already exists, there are some people from 2024 that haven't received their 25th year jubilee. The faction would like to know if this is being handled. Is the government aware that they were not paid out? What is the status of those existing jubilees?

The civil servants are asking about the vacation pay. The 7% increase was paid out last year, but the legislation is not in as yet.

They are asking why can't the jubilees also be paid out the same way since the legislation is going to be more than likely approved by Parliament. Whatever basis that we paid out the vacation pay, since it is the same legislation, why can't jubilees be paid out? It is the same legislation. Why haven't the jubilees been paid out similar to the vacation pay? The faction learnt that public school teachers have to request their jubilee. The faction finds this a bit weird and unfair. The faction is of the opinion that this should be automated similar to that in government.

The faction notes that clarity needs to be given to the civil servants. In June vacation pay was paid out and in June persons also made their jubilees. Based on this same legislation, why can't at least then the jubilees be paid out from the time you paid out vacation pay, because the legal basis is there. You paid out vacation pay. A jubilee was made in June, July, August, September, and December up to now, even the ones this year. Why can't that be paid out the same way we paid out the vacation pay? The faction is of the opinion that the vacation pay is the same law and the law isn't approved in Parliament as yet either. We paid out vacation pay, so why not pay out the jubilees the same way, using the same mechanisms.

The faction indicates that the Prime Minister indicated that the 2024 will be paid. The faction continues and mentions that that would mean that this would have to come with the new budget that is coming also. The faction would like to know if the jubilees that were missed in 2024, that will be paid, have to now be put in budget 2025 to be paid. The faction would like clarity on that.

The United People's Party-faction has taken note of the draft with interest and mentions that this is what a exemplification of a government is about, continuation and understanding that when you have something that benefits the people of Sint Maarten, benefits the civil servants, the largest workforce that we have, we always welcome anything to enhance what was there. Enhancement is always welcome. The faction mentions the union and would like to know their feedback and their take on the minor changes or any recommendations that the unions have provided that is not taken up and why were they not able to be taken up.

The faction also mentions that it is happy to hear that the BRA was signed. This is something that has kept a lot of civil servants

stagnant for years. It has been a major problem, because government used to be something that everyone wanted to go there and then because of these situations over the past few years we have seen everyone wanting to leave the organization. The faction is happy to hear that this is moving.

The **Unified Resilient St. Maarten Movement-faction** has taken note of the draft and inquires if the Prime Minister can share any correspondences from the previous Prime Minister in relation to any agreements that were made for this.

The faction would like clarity on the matter of the payment of jubilees for 2024 and asked that this matter be looked into so that it is clear law-wise, year-wise, and financially.

The **Party for Progress-faction** has taken note of the draft. The faction mentions that on the slide it mentioned 15 years and 20 years where it was the amount that was going to be paid out, as part of the suggestion of the changes in the legislation, was 50% of a month's pay and not a day added. The faction would like to understand the reasoning for why not adding a day.

Looking at it in financial terms, adding a day seems less than the other option of a payout. Not that it's one or the other, the faction just wants to understand the logic behind no extra vacation day added.

The **Democratic Party-faction** queried if someone celebrating a jubilee somewhere in 2025, is it that according to the BRA that person will be paid out in 2026. Everybody for 2025 and everybody for 2024 in 2025.

The faction continues and states that the payments that are going to be taking place in 2025, even for 2024, would have to be in the budget 2025.

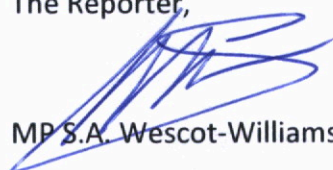
The faction would like to request an overview to be provided in terms of 2024 and 2025, because any payments in 2025, even

though the person might have celebrated their jubilee in 2024, we will also need it in the budget 2025, if they were not paid.

This report is to be considered as Final Report.

Stipulated in the meeting of the Central Committee of April 14, 2025

The Reporter,



MP S.A. Wescot-Williams