

Daily OBSERVER

“No Law Against Bribery”

Publication Date: September 23, 2011 - 8:12pm.



Senator Gbehzohngar Findley, - Asserts Senator Findley; By: Joaquin Sendolo

Grand Bassa County Senior Senator, Gbehzohngar Findley has said that in the absence of the Code of Conduct Act, no public official is prohibited from accepting bribes.

His remarks were contained in a statement he delivered during a recent interaction with members of the Liberia Extractive Industry and Transparency International (LEITI) in Grand Bassa County.

Commenting on the issue of bribery as a core factor influencing legislators into ratifying concession agreements, as perceived by many in the public, Senator Findley said there were no laws prohibiting public officials from accepting bribes.

According to him, the failure on the part of the 52nd National Legislature to act on the drafted Code of Conduct Act was a recipe for making bribery an acceptable thing to do.

“Personally,” he said “part of the Code of Conduct Act that prohibits a legislator from doing other businesses is the one I am against. I have no problems with the Act prohibiting legislators from being part of Mining, Agriculture and other key sectors that are related to concession. However, the law must not prohibit me (as a businessman or a doctor) from doing those things that are related to my profession.”

“The law is good,” he furthered, “but it needs to be modified to be free of those doubts before I can agree to its passage into law [when it reaches the Senate]. If the Act is free of all these doubts, it will be one of the best laws to consolidate the fight against corruption in Liberia.”

Meanwhile, Senator Findley has admitted that the current National Legislature has ineffectively discharged its responsibility to the people.

The failure to attend sessions and constructively participate in the formulation of matters of national concern on the part of legislators were among key factors cited by Senator Findley as to be blamed for the ‘ineptness’ of that august body.

He further blamed the failure on the part of legislators to effectively meet the needs and aspirants of the people on the composition of the current assembly. Senator Finley observed that the Legislature is composed of various committees with members who have equal stake in any decision taken or made – something he believed has the propensity to stall the progress of the assembly.

He cited the simple majority vote as the rule of the game; adding that in the absence of two-third members of that august body, decision-making processes are incomplete. "...because, no decision can be taken in the absence of others," he added.

The Grand Bassa Senior Senator also hinted that "majority of the lawmakers and senators, for reasons best known to them, irregular show-up for work. As a Senator, I cannot coerce any member into going to work. After all, we all have equal rank."

He explained that 'such lack of job ethics' had made it extremely difficult for any decision to be reached in a timely manner, since those absent have to be a part of such decision-making process. "In fact most of us are not even patient to read concession agreements brought to us. As a result, we do not know and do not understand the positive and negative consequences of the agreements on our people," Senator Finley noted.