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Javan James Won't Seek Reelection, Opts for Academic Pursuit

James to prioritize education in next career phase

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Senator Javan James. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

Senator Javan James, who is completing his third term as a lawmaker, will not seek reelection during this year's senatorial race.

Speaking to the Consortium during an interview last week, Mr. James said he will instead focus on obtaining an associate degree in accounting at the University of the Virgin Islands, though he may opt for online classes instead of in-person attendance.

Mr. James said he is satisfied with the manner in which he represented constituents during his tenure, noting not only bills he's introduced but also collaborative efforts on meaningful measures.

"What people fail to understand is it's not just about all the legislation that I've brought, it's also about the legislation I had a yes vote or a no vote on. It's about those zonings and variances that I had an input in," he said. "All those lease agreements that came before the Senate, all that speaks to a total body of work. And when you watch the total body of work that we have done, whether I was on the opposing side or not, it was in the best interest of people of the Virgin Islands. So I'm very, very proud of it."

Mr. James recalled voting against an early version of the special purpose vehicle during the resecuritization deal that sought to save the Government Employees' Retirement System from insolvency. He contended that his and other lawmakers' close scrutiny led to a much better outcome than what the original legislation would have provided. The measure saw many setbacks but an early version that Mr. James voted against [was approved by other senators](#). Renewed interest came after [the Senate-approved deal failed to find buyers in the bond market](#), and other attempts by the administration to win legislative approval were [rejected multiple times in December 2020](#), including a December 20, 2020 denial that was marked by a famous remark from Senator Novelle Francis. In voting against the measure, Mr. Francis [famously said](#) "hurry dog eat raw meat," quoting former V.I. Governor Alexander Farrelly.

The measure [passed](#) after months of important and oftentimes intense disagreements between the legislative and executive branches of government, and in February 2022, Governor Bryan [signed the measure into law](#).

Mr. James faced backlash in 2022 for being [the only lawmaker from the St. Croix District](#) to vote in favor of a horse racing-related measure that some of his colleagues saw as monopolistic. The bill extended Southland Gaming's monopoly in St. Thomas by preventing any other entity — whether a new resort that would like to include a casino as part of its plans, or a competing firm seeking to offer VLT gambling options — from running a video lottery terminal operation.

Even so, the senator stands firm in his belief that all his actions were for the betterment of the USVI people. "Whether it was a no vote, I don't regret, and whether it was a yes, I don't regret," he said.

Looking ahead, Mr. James sees a future in entertainment and sports, though he did not elaborate further. However, the senator is steadfast in his educational pursuit. "I know one thing, I am going to get that degree," he emphatically stated.

According to the senator, unlike the last election cycle when he originally said [he would not seek reelection](#) and later decided to [run anyway](#), this time there would be no change of heart. "I'm not shying away from this. Anybody that asks me what I'm doing I'm telling them I'm going to cross that stage and get that degree," he said. "There's nothing that could convince me to change my mind..."