

Governor Bryan to WAPA: Mark Kragel 'Has to Go'

Race Relations / **Published On June 22, 2020 05:10 PM /**

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Governor Albert Bryan

Gov. Albert Bryan called for the termination of a high ranking WAPA lawyer over a racially charged social media post by the attorney.

“Fired,” Gov. Bryan said when asked Monday for his reaction to a Facebook post by the Water and Power Authority's Deputy Legal Counsel Mark Kragel over the weekend.

In brief comments to the Consortium, Mr. Bryan said he told WAPA officials that Kragel “... has to go.”

A Facebook post over the weekend by Mr. Kragel, who is white, labeled the Black Lives Matter movement a “domestic terrorist organization” with the “...spoiled mentality of fools (who) have

zero idea of what it takes to be an officer.” The online rant ended with “F*ck Black Lives Matter.”

The WAPA Governing Board [determined](#) in an emergency meeting Monday morning that it had no authority to take any job action against Kragel. Board Chairman Anthony Thomas said the oversight board controls the job of CEO Lawrence Kupfer and other high-level executives. Whether Mr. Kragel keeps his job is in the hands of Mr. Kupfer, Chairman Thomas said.

In a written statement, Mr. Kupfer chastised Kragel for expressing “unpopular, politically incorrect” views on Facebook, but gave no indication disciplinary measures will be taken.

The V.I. Alliance for Consumer Justice, critics of WAPA, said Kragel should be fired. If he is not, Alliance founder Clarence Payne said, Mr. Kupfer should also be terminated.

Virgin Islanders over the weekend banded together to demand the removal of Kragel. A petition created on [Change.org](#), which first sought 500 signatures calling for Mr. Kragel's removal from WAPA, shot passed the goal and was 2,103 as of Monday afternoon.

"I am tired of racist terrorist moving to our territory. There is no place for bigots like Mark in [our] island home and definitely not in a position that balances justice for people of the VI," [wrote Lisa Stevens](#) from St. Croix.

"Anyone that can't understand why Black Lives Matter and can make such disparaging comments about Black Lives needs to NOT be employed at any company that affects Black Lives," wrote Monica Harrigan.

Diamond Ritter, also from St. Croix, [wrote](#), "Count your days, Mark!"

Brittany Dawson, who started the petition, wrote, "We are a community of strong, beautiful, and intelligent people; this kind of racism and inappropriate behavior SHOULD NOT be tolerated.

"As an island that consists primarily of black and brown people, this level of disregard for life and injustice makes him ill equipped to work in any capacity here. He has shown misconduct that is not fitting of someone who should earn funding, in our communities - or any for that matter."