

Plaskett: Mark Kragel 'Needs to be Fired. Period.'

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Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett. By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR VI CONSORTIUM

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett on Monday lent her voice to the ongoing firestorm caused by WAPA Deputy Legal Counsel Mark Kragel, calling for Mr. Kragel to be fired following racially charged comments he made on social media last week.

"The Deputy Legal Counsel of WAPA needs to be fired. Period," Ms. Plaskett [wrote on her Facebook page](#).

"He does not represent our government, our community, the Virgin Islands. His vitriol cannot be in anyway tolerated particularly when it is done during work hours. This is a place of love and respect."

She added, "And if he sues, when have we been afraid of a fight?"

A Facebook post last week by Mr. Kragel, who is white, labeled the Black Lives Matter movement a “domestic terrorist organization.” 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."