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V.I. Democrats To Hold Emergency Meeting on Monday, Postpone Party Office Elections Until Nov 5th

Chair Stedmann Hodge Jr. emphasizes need for comprehensive legislative amendment to Title 18, with party office elections rescheduled for early November; emergency meeting set to address Biden's withdrawal and Harris endorsement

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“The election laws of the Virgin Islands under Title 18 of the Virgin Islands Code has to be amended,” reads a statement from the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands. To allow more time for this to be done, the Democratic party office elections will be postponed until early November.

The comment came from state party chair Stedmann Hodge Jr. during an emergency meeting on Saturday to make a final decision regarding the decision of the Election System of the Virgin

Islands to exclude party offices from the primary election ballot.

The position taken by the party [remains much the same](#) as that articulated in May – that a January ruling by the District Court merely strips ESVI of the authority to certify and/or reject the party primary process; it does not remove the responsibility of conducting the primaries from the system.?

However, because the definition of political parties was removed from one section of Title 18, leaving only “political bodies” – which are prohibited from being selected in a primary election – in another section, territorial Democrats have concluded that Judge Robert Molloy’s ruling has left the ESVI with “no statutory basis or authority to conduct a primary election,” according to the statement from the VI Democratic Party.?

The party has drafted an amendment for Title 18 and forwarded the bill to the V.I. Legislature, however after discussion with lawmakers it was decided that a more “robust and comprehensive” fix was needed, something which informed the party’s decision to postpone party office elections until November 5th.

The party notes that despite the question of party office primaries being in flux, ESVI has moved forward with the nomination process for candidates seeking election to party offices, providing nomination papers, informing candidates whose nomination petitions were not in compliance, [publishing the names of candidates](#), and vetting the status of aspirants to party offices.

“The Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands has been excluded in all matters surrounding the process and will request that party offices be included in the August primary to resolve this matter,” the party says, notwithstanding its plans to hold its own party office primaries in November.?

Meanwhile, another emergency meeting has been scheduled for Monday evening to discuss the developments on the national front - the withdrawal of President Joe Biden [from consideration for re-election](#) and his subsequent endorsement of Vice President Kamala Harris for the top of the ticket.