

Final Words from Capehart, Carrion, and Frett-Gregory as Legislative Tenure Ends

As Senators Diane Capehart, Samuel Carrion, Donna Frett-Gregory, and Javan James prepare to leave office, colleagues highlighted Capehart's legislative impact, praised Carrion's potential as "marketable," and described Frett-Gregory as a "fearless leader"

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Senators Diane Capehart and Samuel Carrion will not return as lawmakers in the 36th Legislature as they [failed to secure sufficient votes](#) in the November 5th general election. Neither will senators [Donna Frett-Gregory](#) and [Javan James](#), who did not seek reelection for various personal reasons. Ms. Frett-Gregory said she has committed to caring for her ailing mother, while Mr. James plans to explore further educational pursuits.

During the 35th Legislature's final session, three of the four lawmakers addressed their colleagues and the public as they prepared to wrap up their law-making duties.

"It has been a really great experience, learning and growing," said Senator Carrion, summing up his two terms in the Legislature. "Thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity to be able to serve and represent you. It has been an honor and a privilege," he told the people of St. Croix. Mr. Carrion has promised to continue to work on behalf of Virgin Islanders. "I am not going anywhere," he declared, promising to press on with advocacy work. "I will be lobbying and being around to ensure that things continue marching the way they should on behalf of our people."

His colleagues expressed confidence in his abilities, with Senator Novelle Francis referring to him as "marketable." "I believe that any entity will be happy to employ and pick up Senator Carrion. He has so much to offer."

Like Mr. Carrion, Ms. Frett-Gregory has promised to champion the causes of Virgin Islanders. She chaired the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance. Sen. Francis is expected to take up that mantle in the 36th Legislature.

"I am profoundly grateful, colleagues, to the people of the Virgin Islands, for the trust they have shown me over the years," said Frett-Gregory, visibly emotional at points during her remarks. "I am proud of what we've accomplished in just six short years," she added, having spent three terms as a lawmaker. In the 34th Legislature, she served as president of the Senate, a role she was grateful to her colleagues for. She told the people of St. Thomas that she "enjoyed being your senator."

"It has been the professional honor of my life to serve as your senator. Today is not goodbye, but I promise I will remain a fierce advocate for good government and sound public policy in the Virgin Islands," she promised.

Senator Milton Potter, in his remarks, described Ms. Frett-Gregory as a "fearless leader" whose "dynamic leadership will absolutely be missed." Mr. Francis, too, admitted that he will miss working with Ms. Frett-Gregory. "We spent so much time in conversation and really working towards the betterment of this community... We have not often agreed, but certainly, we have been able to strike that balance," he mused.

Ms. Capehart was also afforded an opportunity to address her constituents and colleagues upon her departure. "When I come here, I come to work," she stated. "The word on the street in St. Croix is 'Oh, she don't work,'" Ms. Capehart shared, alluding to her loss at the polls. Rebutting that assertion, the departing lawmaker referenced the approximately 88 bills that she had worked on during her time in the Legislature. "We've had to make tough decisions, and some that may not have been favorable to some," reflected Ms. Capehart. "When we vote, we vote based on the next generations to come."

"You passed some meaningful pieces of legislation," agreed Senator Marise James.

Though Senator Javan James was absent from the final session, his colleagues all wished him well. "I'm sure he'll be fine. He'll be fine," said Senator Marvin Blyden. "I just watched that young man grow and grow and grow," noted Sen. Francis. Mr. James once worked in Francis's legislative office as an administrative assistant before entering the world of elective politics.

The remaining eleven members of the 35th Legislature will be joined by Kurt Vialet, Avery Lewis, Hubert L. Frederick, and Clifford A. Joseph in the 36th Legislature.

