

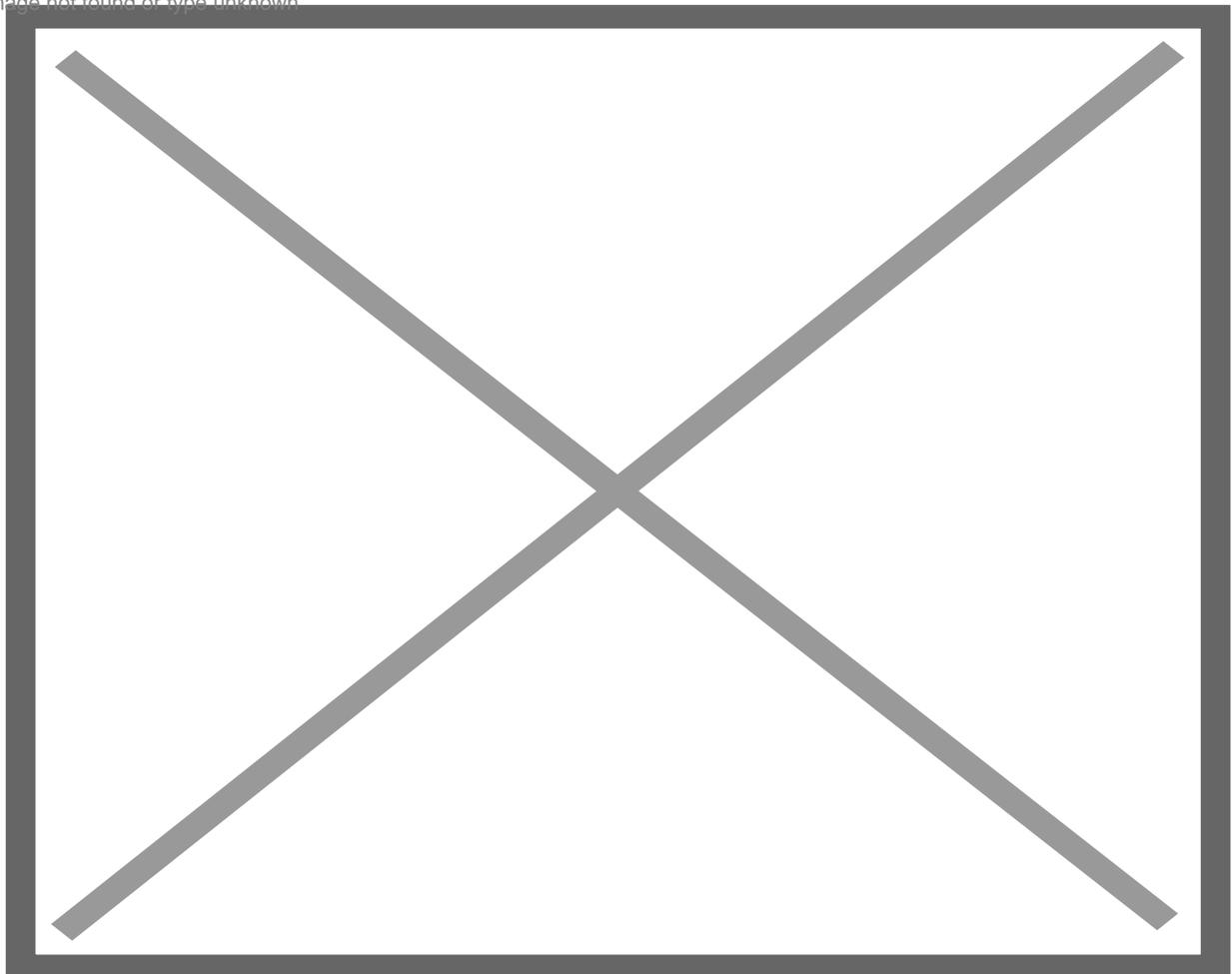
Fired Taxicab Commission Director Sues, Claims Board Member Was Illegitimate, Making Her Termination Void

Vernice Gumbs is challenging her termination as ED of the Taxicab Commission, arguing that the board lacked a legal quorum when it voted to fire her. She claims one commissioner was ineligible, making the decision invalid and her dismissal void.

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Vernice Gumbs By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

Former Executive Director of the Taxicab Commission, Vernice Gumbs, is challenging her termination in court, alleging that the commission's board was not properly constituted when the decision to fire her was taken, and thus the dismissal is void.

Filed last week, Ms. Gumbs is asking the court to reverse her termination, which she says was communicated to her via a letter from TCC chair Elizabeth Hansen-Wattley on February 20, 2025. Her dismissal was effective “immediately,” for reasons of “continued insubordination,” which Ms. Gumbs denies. “There was no insubordination ever by Vernice Gumbs, nor was there any record of such prior to, or on February 20, 2025,” her civil complaint reads.

Allegations and denials of insubordination notwithstanding, the complaint hinges on defects with composition of the board, which has [long been an issue](#) for the TCC.

In law, the TCC must comprise 9 members; three taxi medallion holders and three members of the public, one of each from St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix. The remaining seats must be filled by an employee of the Department of Tourism, an employee of the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, and a retired person with a background in law enforcement or the legal profession. One of the government employees must reside in the St. Croix district, and the other in the St. Thomas district. Five commissioners represent a quorum for the holding of official meetings and the transaction of business.

Currently, there are only seven of the nine seats on the TCC occupied. One commissioner, Franklin Brathwaite, has been deemed illegitimate by Ms. Gumbs’s attorneys, as he has reportedly never held a medallion, despite working as a taxi driver on St. Thomas.

When commissioners made the decision to fire Ms. Gumbs, “Vincent Georges and Loretta Lloyd were not present because they were never notified of the meeting,” the lawsuit claims. Along with the three vacancies, this means that there were only five people at that meeting. Mr. Brathwaite's alleged illegitimacy, however, means that the termination decision was made by only four valid commissioners – one less than the five needed for the quorum.

“Because of the unlawfully constituted TCC and the lack of a quorum that would enable it to conduct business, Ms. Gumbs is entitled to a declaratory judgement that the TCC's decision is void, and an injunction enjoining TCC from terminating her or purporting to terminate her,” the lawsuit concludes.

Ms. Gumbs served as Executive Director from September 9, 2022.