

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Carol Burke Pushes Back on Criticism of Democratic Party's New Election Standards

Party Chair Carol Burke told lawmakers that newly adopted certification rules reflect federal compliance, transparency, and party integrity, despite criticism that the requirements could exclude some would-be candidates ahead of the November election.

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Carol Burke, chairwoman of the V.I. Democratic Party **By. V.I. LEGISLATURE.**

Carol Burke, chairwoman of the V.I. Democratic Party, is standing by recently implemented standards for individuals aspiring to contest primary and general elections on a Democratic ticket.

Ms. Burke appeared before the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection on Friday. She joined other invited testifiers in a wide-ranging discussion on election preparedness matters.

About a week prior, Senator Kurt Violet, a democrat, [lambasted the party's new eligibility requirements](#) and described the rules as “hypocritical.”

The party's chair, however, has attempted to provide some clarity. According to Ms. Burke's testimony, the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands became registered with the Federal Election Commission in June 2025. This registration subjects the party to “federal reporting, disclosure, record keeping and compliance requirements.”

The adoption of a “formal election and certification plan”, therefore, “supports these obligations by ensuring discipline, governance, transparency and accountability,” Ms. Burke explained. She argued that the standards are “not barriers to participation” but instead are “mechanisms that preserve fairness, predictability and integrity.”

The standards speak to eligibility and good standing, Ms. Burke declared. The new guidelines govern who may seek nomination as well as endorsement thresholds. This, she said, “demonstrates baseline party support certification.” The neutrality rules “prevents bias and conflicts of interest,” she added.

Furthermore, transparency provisions ensure “equal access and informed participation.” The standards also speak to dispute resolution and record keeping.

The new standards, Ms. Burke said, are not a unique requirement. She testified that “every state and territorial Democratic Party operates under written election or delegate selection plans that include these same categories of standards.”

“Standards are not optional in modern election administration,” Ms. Burke stated. Instead, she said they are the “means by which constitutional authority, fairness and public trust are sustained.” She informed lawmakers that the plan “places the party squarely within national best practices.” The party has already updated its bylaws to “ensure full alignment with that plan.”

The bylaws require an election aspirant to be registered as a Democrat at least 6 months before the primary election. As Senator Ray Fonseca noted, “a lot of people would already be excluded if you're not already registered right now as a Democrat.”

Ms. Burke remained steadfast, explaining that “we are not looking at anybody who come into the party six months before the primary, because we don't believe that they have the capability to really engage the party and its principles.”

She noted that there have been repeated complaints about individuals who “come in and out of the party.”

The Democratic Chair also responded to questions from Senator Milton Potter, who remarked on the novelty of the certification standards and processes. Ms. Burke made special mention of the newly introduced loyalty pledge. “You've been doing the loyalty pledge. We just have not captured it in a plan,” she told him. According to Ms. Burke, the pledge “says that you will run in a coordinated campaign with other like Democrats.”

In the event that an individual does not meet the party's certification standards, Ms. Burke explained that the person cannot be prevented from contesting the general election. However, that individual would be unable to run as a democrat and would not be recognized by the party.

"We're not preventing anybody from running for office. All we're saying, if you want to run as a Democrat, these are the four, five things that we would like for you to meet," she stated.

Though Senator Kurt Violet was not present at Friday's meeting, there was some concern from others in attendance. Among them were Senator Marvin Blyden and Supervisor of Elections Caroline Fawkes.

"It's new here. It's never, ever been done. That's why we had pushback," was Ms. Burke's assessment.

The Democratic Party's new certification standards will inform the party's primary, and eventually the names that will be placed on the ballot in the upcoming election in November.