

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Residents Say They Were Misled Into Signing Delegate Candidate's Nomination Petition

Moorehead says a man identifying himself as David Greaux claimed he was running for Congress and used a petition with no candidate name, while Troy Williams says former senator Javan James circulated a Brett McClafferty petition he signed by mistake.

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From left, Brett Matthew McClafferty, David Greaux, and former Senator Javan James.

Several residents of St. Croix have said that they mistakenly endorsed the nomination of a congressional candidate who they never would have supported had they known the truth.

Businessman and community activist Shomari Moorehead took to social media on Monday to report a disturbing encounter at a popular St. Croix restaurant. "Today a guy stopped me at Chicken Shack and asked for my support. He said he was running for congress and was short a few signatures. I figured, why not? A signature doesn't mean support," Mr. Moorehead posted.

The man reportedly identified himself as David Greaux, however as Mr. Moorehead later learned, there was no such aspirant. In an interview with the Consortium, he said that his initial conversation with the man on the way into the restaurant did not sit well with him, so he questioned Mr. Greaux on the way back out.

It turned out that on the front page of the signature collection form, the space where the candidate's name is supposed to go was blank. "You're the one running, you sure you're the one running," Mr. Moorehead recalled asking. He received an affirmative response. Not satisfied, he called the Election System, who reportedly confirmed his suspicions that Mr. Greaux was not in the running.

Mr. Moorehead's social media post, as of press time, has garnered several comments, one of them from a woman who described a similar experience at a Sunny Isles fast-food restaurant last week. Chenelle Cuencas said that she also placed her signature on the nomination sheet when solicited, along with several other people at the establishment. "This is insane...this will definitely discourage me from giving my support so freely in the future," she wrote.

On Tuesday morning, The Consortium was privy to correspondence from an aspiring candidate himself, alleging that he too had signed a nomination paper under a false impression. Troy Williams, who is mounting an independent run for election to the Legislature, sent a request to the Election System of the Virgin Islands that his signature on a nomination petition be invalidated, because it "did not reflect [his] intended support."

Speaking to Consortium journalists, Mr. Williams said he was at a gas station in early May when he met an acquaintance and former colleague in the political arena. "I recognized my good friend Javan James. We were formerly Young Democrat members together, and he's a guy that I respect," Mr. Williams said. Assuming that Mr. James, a former senator, was once again seeking political office, he willingly signed the nomination petition his friend was holding. In turn, Mr. James reportedly signed Mr. Williams's petition as well. After the exchange of signatures, Mr. James "kind of jokingly said, 'you wouldn't believe who you'd be signing for,'" Mr. Williams recounted. He then turned over the paper to find that the petition was not for Mr. James, but for someone else entirely.

In each of these three instances, the signers say they had inadvertently endorsed the nomination of Brett Matthew McClafferty, the St. Thomas businessman currently seeking election as Delegate to Congress while battling numerous civil lawsuits, preparing for a criminal trial on fraud allegations, and undergoing personal and business bankruptcy proceedings. After being declared ineligible for election to the Legislature due to previous convictions outside of the Virgin Islands, Mr. McClafferty switched his aspirations to the U.S. House of Representatives, which under federal rules does not exclude candidates based on criminal history.

Mr. McClafferty himself commented on Mr. Moorehead's post alleging that the incident may have been a "dirty political trick" by one of the other aspirants to the office, "because my circulator in STX is a well-known brother of a former senator, and my name is on the cover sheet of every petition." According to Mr. McClafferty, his nomination petition had been signed by over 520 people across both districts, "so we don't need to 'con' anybody for a last minute signature."



From left, Brett Matthew McClafferty, David Greaux, and Sunil Sharma (via Facebook)

Mr. James told the Consortium on Wednesday morning that he eventually decided to stop circulating nomination papers for Mr. McClafferty. He said he could not recall exactly when he made that decision, but said his "spirit" told him not to continue. The former senator said all of the nomination papers he had circulated were destroyed, forcing Mr. McClafferty to restart the process.

Mr. Moorehead, in his Consortium interview, rebutted Mr. McClafferty's claims. The man who identified himself as David Greaux can be seen in a photo on Mr. McClafferty's own social media profile posted on May 19, where the aspiring congressional candidate called him "our lead operative in-charge...of STT." Mr. Moorehead confirmed that this is the same person he met that day, who provided him with a nomination petition to sign that had a blank space where the aspirant's name was supposed to go.

"It's disheartening that people are playing on our community like this," Mr. Moorehead said. "If you're going to go to this length to misrepresent yourself, it speaks volumes about the person's character, and we don't need people like that in our community."

Mr. Williams was similarly disturbed by his experience. Contrary to Mr. McClafferty's claim that a "brother of a former senator" was circulating his nomination petition, Mr. Williams was approached by a former senator himself. "I believe transparency is important, and my feeling is that the signature on that day does not reflect my intent," he said.

Both men say they have reached out to the Election System of the Virgin Islands in an attempt to invalidate their signatures on the nomination paperwork. On Tuesday, Consortium journalists spoke to Deputy Supervisor of Elections Terrell Alexandre, who said that two people made written requests to have their names taken off the list of signatures. However, ESVI had not yet had a chance to "look into" those requests. "We just received them today," Mr. Alexandre said.

Mr. Williams's correspondence to election officials, however, was first sent via email on May 9. Mr. Alexandre, according to the electronic record, was one of the recipients. In that email chain, Election Supervisor Caroline Fawkes told Mr. Williams that ESVI staff were not authorized to strike any signatures off the list. His only remedy, she told him, was to request that the aspirant remove the signature themselves. Mr. Williams told the Consortium that his requests to have a conversation with Mr. McClafferty about the matter have been ignored.

As Mr. Alexandre pointed out, however, it is the responsibility of individuals to be "fully knowledgeable about what they're signing." Both Mr. Williams and Mr. Moorehead agreed. However, in a political system which often depends heavily on personal connections and general public goodwill, they argue that deceptive tactics that exploit the interpersonal relationships of a tightly-knit community should have no place in Virgin Islands society. Both men suggest that there are gaps in the nomination process that may need to be filled.

"I think it requires more proactive and stronger legislation," said Mr. Moorehead. Mr. Williams called for a "petition signature revocation process, which would basically create a formal process allowing a voter to revoke a petition signature before certification."

As it stands, Mr. Alexandre told the Consortium that, "I think everybody who was issued a defect, they satisfied those requirements." While Mr. McClafferty issued a notice to press on Tuesday afternoon stating that he had indeed crossed the threshold of required signatures and has been duly certified by the Board of Elections, ESVI officials subsequently announced that the official candidate listing for the 2026 election cycle has been postponed, in order to allow more time to "complete the review of nomination

papers submitted by aspirants.”

The official listing of candidates, said ESVI officials, will be published “no later than Friday, June 12.”

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