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Journalist-Led Debate Series Begins Sunday as WTJX and Consortium Question 2026 Primary Candidates

WTJX and the Consortium launch a three-night debate series Sunday, with Ernice Gilbert and Marcellina Ventura-Douglas questioning candidates for lieutenant governor, governor and delegate to Congress as early voting begins Monday across the territory.

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WTJX Radio News Anchor Marcellina Ventura-Douglas and Consortium Publisher Ernice Gilbert moderate the 2026 primary debates for governor, lieutenant governor and delegate to Congress. By. WTJX.

The Virgin Islands Consortium and WTJX are renewing their long-running election partnership for a three-night 2026 primary debate series featuring candidates for lieutenant governor, governor

and delegate to Congress.

The series begins Sunday at 7 p.m. with an hour-long debate among candidates for lieutenant governor. Gubernatorial candidates will participate in a two-hour session Monday at 8 p.m., followed by a 90-minute debate among Delegate to Congress candidates Tuesday at 8 p.m.

The recorded debates will be moderated by Consortium Publisher Ernice Gilbert and WTJX Radio News Anchor Marcellina Ventura-Douglas and made available through both the Consortium and WTJX.

Tanya-Marie Singh, chief executive officer of the V.I. Public Broadcasting System and WTJX, said the questioning was developed to draw out perspectives that may not have emerged during earlier candidate forums.

“We tried to stay away from...questions that were already put forward [in previous debates,]” Ms. Singh said.

She described the series as distinct from other events held during the primary campaign.

“This is the only journalist-driven debate of the primary season,” she said.

Ms. Singh said the combined experience of Mr. Gilbert and Ms. Ventura-Douglas gives the moderators extensive knowledge of territorial issues and the candidates seeking office.

“They are entrenched in news everyday,” Ms. Singh noted. “They have the benefit of research and institutional memory.”

The debate series continues a partnership between the territory’s largest news platform and its public broadcasting system. Ms. Singh said the arrangement brings together two news organizations with different audiences and methods of delivering information.

“I like the juxtaposition of those two feeding off of each other...and bringing to bear the news from their different platforms into one debate format,” Ms. Singh said, referring to Mr. Gilbert and Ms. Ventura-Douglas as moderators.

The partnership also allows residents to follow the debates through either the Consortium or WTJX, combining the news outlet’s audience with the broadcaster’s reach across the territory.

The first debate, featuring candidates for lieutenant governor, will air Sunday at 7 p.m. and run for one hour.

The gubernatorial debate will follow Monday at 8 p.m. and continue for two hours.

The series will conclude Tuesday at 8 p.m. with a 90-minute discussion involving candidates for Delegate to Congress.

With early voting beginning Monday, Ms. Singh encouraged residents — particularly those who remain undecided — to watch or listen before casting their ballots.

“Before I go to vote, I do listen to and watch all debates,” Ms. Singh said.

She said she had not been given advance access to the recorded sessions and would view them alongside the public.

“I’m excited to share this with the Virgin Islands, and I’ll be watching just like everybody else.”

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