

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Governor De Jongh To Consider Pardoning Senator "Chucky" Hansen

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Governor John P. de Jongh has responded to a request made by Senator Alicia "Chucky" Hansen that she be pardoned following the V.I. Supreme Court's decision concluding that Hansen was not eligible to serve as a Senator, and ordered the Superior Court to remove her from the November 4 General Election ballot.

In a statement released by Government House on Sunday, Governor de Jongh said the Court had spoken, and that in such trying times, there's no doubt we all should file our taxes, especially in the "extreme fiscal crisis" we're currently living through.

"The Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands has spoken and it has answered the question of whether the crime of willful failure to file tax returns is a crime of moral turpitude which would disqualify one so convicted, and not pardoned, from serving in the Legislature," de Jongh said. "The Court said that it was such a crime. Few can question the duty-- legal and moral--of all to file the tax returns they are required to file and pay the taxes they owe. Surely we can all recognize this duty and most especially so in a time of extreme fiscal crisis when we lack the necessary resources to fully fund our government."

However, while the Governor acknowledged that we all need to do our fair share, he said voters of St. Croix, after learning that Sen. Hansen had been convicted for failing to file taxes, elected her twice thereafter, to the 29th and 30th Legislatures.

In light of this, the Governor said he has directed Attorney General Vincent Frazer to research the issues presented by the Virgin Islands Supreme Court, and to also examine Sen. Hansen's pardon request. The Governor wants the research to be done with speed so that "he can have the benefit of full legal analysis before deciding what action will best serve the public interest", the Government House release states.

Governor Dejongh added that such matters must be resolved swiftly to assure the rights of Sen. Hansen and the St. Croix voters, as well as to meet the requirements of the election laws.

On Thursday, the Virgin Islands Supreme Court ruled that Senator Hansen be taken off the November 4 General Election ballot because her crime of not paying taxes was one of "moral turpitude".

The suit, leveled against Hansen by former senator and now Board of Elections St. Croix District Chairman Adelbert Bryan, who was represented by attorney Emile Henderson, accomplished its job by successfully painting Senator Hansen's actions as a crime committed "willfully."

In his case against Hansen, attorney Henderson argued that it is "indisputable that Hansen was convicted of three counts of willful failure to file income tax returns — a crime not just against the Virgin Islands government, but a violation of her oath to the people of the Virgin Islands," he said.

Henderson contends that although the crime is a misdemeanor, it involves "evil motive, bad purpose and intentional, deliberate conduct, which would then constitute a crime involving moral turpitude"

Supreme Court Excerpt: