

The Virgin Islands Consortium

These Are The Senators Who Have Signed Capehart's Petition

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Senator Diane Capehart [has been circulating](#) a petition that requires the signature of seven of her colleagues, besides her own, in order to discuss the eligibility of Sen. Alicia “Chucky” Hansen to continue to serve as a Virgin Islands’ lawmaker. According Senator Capehart's office today, six senators, including Capehart, have signed the petition.

They are:

1. **Senator Diane Capehart**
2. **At Large Senator Craig Barshinger**
3. **Senator Terrence "Positive" Nelson**

4. **Senator Kenneth Gittens**
5. **Senator Clifford Graham**
6. **Senator Sammuel Sanes**

St. Croix senators Judi Buckley and Nereida "Nellie" Rivera-O'Reilly are the only two sitting senators who have not signed the petition. Hansen hasn't signed the document either, but she is not expected to sign a petition that could determine her tenure as a senator.

Capehart, a freshman senator, is lobbying that the Senate, during its scheduled Sept. 26 gathering, settle into a Committee of the Whole meeting to address Hansen's eligibility. Hansen is currently a sitting senator in the 30th Legislature.

In a statement released last week, Capehart said that while she had received positive feedback from her colleagues, many were still reluctant to sign the petition, citing a pending opinion from the Senate's legal counsel.

The *VI Consortium* reached out to Senators Buckley and Rivera-O'Reilly; however, both offices declined to speak on their bosses' behalf. We were told to expect a response from the senators as soon as it was possible; however, as of press time, we had not received a statement from either of the two senators' offices.

Senator Capehart has been pushing to get her colleagues to join what she believes is a legitimate cause, and has openly questioned the viability of the Senate body if a sitting member thereof may be ineligible to serve.

"Having the body conduct any business with a member, whose qualifications are questionable at best, opens the body to legal challenges," Capehart said last week. "These challenges will have serious legal ramifications, will be costly to taxpayers and will paralyze the ability of the legislature to do the business of the people of the Virgin Islands going forward."

She added: "I am again urging my fellow senators who believe in the rule of law to sign the petition I am circulating that, if signed by at least eight of us, would bring the matter before the Committee of the Whole."

While Senate President Shawn-Michael Malone--who has the authority to call a Committee of the Whole meeting--has been unwilling to make a move, Capehart said it was up to "fair-minded individuals" in the Senate to do so.

"In the absence of action by the president of this body to resolve this matter, it is up to the fair-minded individuals in this body to sign the petition," Capehart said, "I have signed the petition."