

The Virgin Islands Consortium

"Chucky" Hansen's Big Bash Does Not Translate To Votes, Concert-Goers Say

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The people came in droves. As far as the eye could see, cars were parked in lots, on sidewalks and along any roadway they could fit. All came dressed in their finest party attire ready for an epic concert that would rival any the island had seen before. This was the scene at Saturday night's campaign kickoff party for embattled Senator Alicia "Chucky" Hansen at the Canegata Ballpark in Christiansted.

The star-studded event appeared to be the hottest ticket on St. Croix, and, quite possibly, the Virgin Islands, this weekend. It featured some of the biggest Caribbean entertainers, including Destra Garcia, Nakeem, Elizabeth Watley, the Mighty Pat and more.



Sen. Alicia "Chucky" Hansen's Grand

Campaign Kickoff

But, despite the festive mood, many concert-goers *VI Consortium* spoke with said their presence at Hansen's event would not translate into a vote for the veteran senator on November 4.

"This is just free entertainment to me," one woman said, adding that she had come to the outdoor event particularly to see the performance of soca superstar, Destra. "That's all it is. I won't be voting for her, no."

When asked why she would not be voting for Hansen, the concert-goer referenced the fact that Sen. Hansen was the only senator that voted against Governor John de Jongh repaying \$500,000 he used from the government's coffers to fund security upgrades to his private home.

"She was the only one that said no, and I don't think that's fair," she said. "I mean, it's our money, so give us back."

Another man, who relocated from Chicago three years ago, said he is still on the fence with voting for the senator.

"Well, we'll see. I have to follow up more on what she wants to do down here and she people talk a lot of stuff," he said.



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The man added that he is very concerned about who gets into political office now that he is expecting the birth of a child.

"I got a baby coming soon and my baby is being born in the VI, so that's what matters to me," he said. "As long as it works out for me and my family, it's all for the better."

Another woman also said she attended the event for a fun night out.

"I'm just here for the entertainment," she said, adding that she has not been engaged in the 2014 political season because "everybody says the same thing, so I'm not following it that much." The concert-goer also confirmed she would vote in November, "just to see what will happen. What it's going to turn out like."

Several other people the *VI Consortium* randomly polled at the event also said they would not be pushing No. 10, Sen. Hansen's ballot number, on Election Day.

But, Sen. Hansen's supporters were also in the crowd. One man said he has been a lifelong supporter of the senator and will continue to give her his vote.

"I always backed her ever since I was small, so it's just a continuation," he said.

However, regarding Hansen's recent legal battles stemming from her failure to file taxes, the man said she should pay for her crimes.



Sen. Alicia "Chucky" Hansen's Grand Campaign Kickoff

"They make mistakes, so they have to deal with them," he said, in reference to elected officials being held accountable for the decisions they make. "Just like how we make mistakes, we have to deal with them, too. If she's done something and she has to pay for it, then she has to pay for it. Equal opportunity for everybody."

The Hansen supporter said he believes the senator has paid for her past failings by "giving back to the community." However, he admitted that he, too, has been unhappy with the messages coming from the senatorial and gubernatorial candidates, describing it as "standing in front of a gun and waiting for it to go off."

Another longtime Hansen supporter emphatically said, "I am here because I want to vote for "Chucky"." He went on to say that he has known the senator "for many, many years."

He continued, "I remember when [hurricane] Marilyn came, she went about the neighborhoods and she brought us food in the evenings, and I respect her for that."

The man later revealed his family's connection to Sen. Hansen.

"Besides, she is the godmother of my godson," he said.

As for Hansen's recent legal troubles, the elder Hispanic gentleman said, "She is innocent all the way and I support her all the way."

Like many of the other attendees who spoke with the *VI Consortium*, the man said he was also disheartened by Virgin Islands' politics, but he remains hopeful.

"For many, many years now, they've promised many, many things and once they get in the seat, they forget," he said. "But I think this year, it's supposed to be a good election."