

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Voters Have Full Use Of DS200 Machines In Run-Off Election

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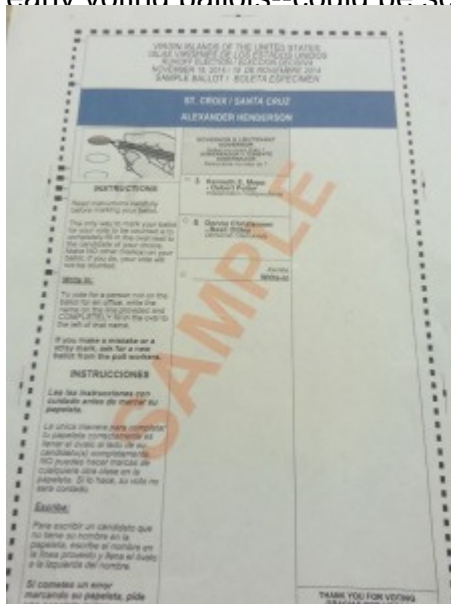


Voters who cast their ballots in the November 18 Run-Off Election will have a very different experience than they did during the November 4 General Election.

This time around, after selecting the gubernatorial candidate of their choice--either manually or by use of the AutoMARK machines--voters will be able to scan their own ballots using the DS200 machines in order to verify their votes before leaving the polling station.

The decision received overwhelming support by the 10 Joint Boards of Elections members attending Thursday's Joint Boards meeting at Gertrude's restaurant on St.

Croix. There, St. Croix District Board Chairman Adelbert Bryan moved to "rescind, repeal and remove" the decision the Joint Boards made on Oct. 27 to use the DS200 machines in a modified capacity, where only ballots that did not fall in any of these categories-- Straight Party vote (symbol ballots), sticker votes, absentee ballots, write-in ballots and early voting ballots--could be scanned through the DS200 tabulator by an election judge. Other ballots were to be hand counted by elections



Sample ballot with gubernatorial candidates Mapp and

Christensen. Click image for full view.

The controversial decision received harsh criticism from the community and even from some employees of the Elections System, who said the machines were working correctly. Tonjia Coverdale, Ph.D., former technology territorial coordinator of the Elections System of the Virgin Islands, eventually resigned her position on Oct. 30, stating that the machines were working as they should and to use them in a modified manner would result in voter disenfranchisement.

At Thursday's meeting, a sample ballot depicting what the official Run-Off Election ballots would be was also decided upon. However, the decision was not without controversy.

While a final version of the sample ballot only contained the names of the two gubernatorial teams--Kenneth E. Mapp-Osbert Potter (Independent) and Donna Christensen-Basil Ottley (Democrat)--an earlier version also contained the symbol for the Democratic Party and the Independent Party, by which voters could select either of the two candidates. However, Joint Board members, except Bryan, voted to remove the party symbol in what they say was an effort to simplify the voting process. However, they opted to add a blank oval to the left of the candidates' name and ballot number for voters to fill in.

Bryan voted against the motion because he said it violated VI Code, which states that ballots are required to include party symbols in order to be valid. Bryan also noted that he voted against the motion that was eventually adopted on Oct. 27 to use the DS200 machines in a modified manner.

In the November 4 General Election, voters could only record their votes on their paper ballots, either manually or by use of the AutoMARK machines, and then deposit the ballot into a holding drum at the bottom of the DS200 machines. Election judges and Board members would handle the ballots from that point.

As of Thursday, Board members in St. Croix were still counting ballots from the November 4 General Election. The most recent update, showing unofficial results, [was listed at 6:48 p.m. on November 11.](#)

Only voters registered before the November 4 General Election will be eligible to vote in the Run-Off Election, which takes place between the two top vote getters of the General Election if they did not receive the required 50+1 percent of the votes in order to win.