

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Christensen: We Can Still Win The Election, ABR VI Deal Should Not Be Rushed

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Delegate to Congress Donna M. Christensen, who is currently in a heated gubernatorial contest with former Lieutenant Governor Kenneth Mapp, has told *VI Consortium* in a brief telephone interview Sunday that she believes her team can still win the runoff election. She also shared her thoughts on the ABR VI Operating Agreement with the Government of the Virgin Islands, and whether it should be signed into law or tabled until a new administration takes office.

Christensen, who was on St. John for a rally, said she believes "we can still win," even though she did not receive an endorsement from Soraya Diase-Coffelt, a reality she said was "disappointing" because she believes their ideals are closer aligned.

"Our campaign, agenda and approach to governance are much more closely aligned than they are to Mapp's," the Delegate said, referring to Mona Barnes and Coffelt, and added that she would be very "surprised" and "disappointed" if Barnes endorsed Mapp, as she met with both former gubernatorial candidates and Barnes assured her she would remain neutral.

Christensen was responding to word that Barnes had endorsed the Mapp-Potter team, and was to show up at his rally on Sunday night to endorse the candidate. *VI Consortium* reached out to Barnes for comment; however, the former Command Sergeant Major reiterated she intended to remain neutral.

After the General Election results showed Mapp leading with as much as 11 percent, Christensen has been waging an aggressive push to make up the deficit she faces going into the runoff election. Mapp was unable to garner the 50+1 percent needed, by law, to win the gubernatorial race. The Christensen-Ottley team have also launched a new campaign slogan dubbed "GUAVA" or "Get Up And Vote Again," and have been traversing the islands seeking support.

On ABR VI, Christensen said while she supported the 30th Legislature's move to send the Operating Agreement into committee for further review as part of the body's due diligence, if after review they found that the deal was a good one, she would not stand in the way of the Agreement being signed into law by Governor de Jongh. However, if the contract was not favorable, she would be in support of another administration taking the helm on it.

"I thought that it was probably too rushed for the [30th Legislature] to be able to decided last week, so I support the fact that it's gone back to committee, and I expect that the Legislature would do their due diligence on the agreement and the ability of the company to really perform. And if they can do that to their satisfaction, I would not necessarily want to hold it up," Christensen said.

Christensen went on to say that if the senators do not agree with the deal, then more time -- even with a new governor and Senate body--should be negotiated, adding that she does not like to be placed in the position where a decision with such great implications for the people of the Virgin Islands has to be made by a deadline set in place by a private firm.

"[We] should not let anybody dictate to us when we're going to decide something," Christensen said, adding that the territory has been here before with other governors.

She continued: "But if they could ascertain and reach a level of comfort with the company, and with the agreement and [see that] the interest of the people of the Virgin Islands are satisfactorily [represented], and is a company that can perform what they say they can perform, [then] I don't think that we should hold it up. But that would be dependent of those criteria being met. And if they cannot and if they have doubts, then certainly we would need to wait."

The run-off election between Christensen and Mapp takes place on Tuesday, Nov. 18, a legal holiday, [as announced](#) by the Government of the Virgin Islands.