

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Capehart, Hansen Granted Recount; St. Thomas Petitioners Denied

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While the St. Thomas-St. John District Board of Elections, lead by Chairman Arturo Watlington, decided against a recount of ballots, the St. Croix District Board has agreed to recount the ballots of some candidates, including Sen. Diane Capehart, Board of Elections candidate Epiphane Joseph, and Sen. Alicia "Chucky" Hansen. The decisions were made by the respective boards on November 26.

In St. Thomas, seven candidates contested seats in the November 4 General Elections; however, in an emergency meeting held Wednesday, with four Board members present, including Claudette Georges, Lydia Hendricks, Alecia Wells and Watlington himself, the Board voted against the request for recount.

Watlington, who said the petitioners have their right to request a recount under VI Code, Title 18 Section 629, explained that Board members Wells and Hendricks both indicated they "were in total disagreement," of a recount and he later made a motion that the St. Thomas-St. John Board vote to deny the request of the seven petitioners. The motion was seconded by Wells.

The St. Thomas-St. John District petitioners were Vince Danet, Bruce Flamon, Stephen "Smokey" Fret, Lawrence "Recon" Olive, Harriet Mercer, Diane Magras and Wilma Marsh-Monsanto.

On St. Croix, candidates who are seeking a recount of the votes include Sen. Capehart, Sen. Hansen, Joseph and senatorial candidate, Naomi Joseph. Naomi Joseph's request was denied by the Board because it was not notarized and was filed late.

Four Board members on St. Croix were present at the meeting and voted in favor of a recount, including Roland Moolenaar, Raymond Williams, Lisa Harris-Moorhead and Liliana Belardo de O'Neal. Rupert Ross and Glenn Webster were not on island, and Adelbert Bryan was absent. There was no clear date given on when the St. Croix recount would begin.

On Tuesday, Hansen took to the radio airwaves and listed a myriad of reasons why her votes, in particular, should be recounted. She cited alleged jump drive reprogramming and missing write-in votes, among her claims.

"Every vote should be counted and respected," Hansen said, "and within that petition, I listed various reasons [for the recount]."

"Among them ballots not counted, differences between the computer count and subsequent actual count, ballots erroneously counted, ballots not counted because of the failure to darken the bubble even though the intent of the voter is clear, ballots not counted because of an issue with the name despite the fact that the intent is clear, failure to count ballots not tabulated by the DS200 even though a hand count would have cast those ballots for me.

She continued: "Ballots that have gone missing before being counted, ballot bins coming in the Elections Board without their security seal; jump drives from voting tabulation that were reprogrammed—and so there are about 14 items and irregularities that took place with those write-in votes. And we want to know what happened to the over 5,000 write-ins that came in on behalf of Alicia "Chucky" Hansen."