

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Board Of Elections Suspends Recount... Again

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Ernice Gilbert **December 15, 2014**



The St. Croix District Board of Elections on Sunday has once again suspended the recounting of November 4 General Election ballots for three candidates, following its restart just last Friday by board Vice-Chairwoman Lilliana Belardo De O'Neal. It was only last Friday when Belardo De O'Neal decided to resume the recount after Virgin Islands Superior Court Judge Harold W. L. Willocks ruled previously to [halt the recount](#) until provisions were made to accommodate those in the public who wished to view the process.

No reasons were given for the suspension, but there's a pending lawsuit brought forth by Senator Nellie Rivera O'Reilly challenging the authority of a candidate who was not

placed on the November 4 General Election ballot to call for a recount. There's also litigation pending against the board that seeks to make sure the public and media can view re-counting, as the board had blocked anyone from viewing the proceedings -- a move that prompted Judge Willocks to halt the process.

Since Willocks's ruling last Monday, accommodations have been made for the public to view the recount, with limited seating inside the Elections Board building and close-circuit viewing on big-screen televisions made available on the sidewalk.

From about 9:45 a.m. to 5:21 p.m. on Friday two teams of talliers, along with board members Harris-Moorhead, Ross, Roland Moolenaar and Belardo de O'Neal, counted at-poll ballots in one room, and rejected, sticker and symbol ballots in another room at the Elections System office in Sunny Isles.

Belardo de O'Neal explained why she decided to continue with the recount despite an upcoming court hearing.

"We will continue to count until that court hearing comes and depending on that court hearing, we will follow the court order, but as far as we stand today, we will continue counting," she said.

The vice-chairman was referring to a case that will be heard in Superior Court on Monday, where the court has subpoenaed the Elections Board, Elections Supervisor and Elections Deputy Supervisor in Sen. Nellie Rivera-O'Reilly's effort to permanently stop the recount. Rivera-O'Reilly maintains that the proceeding is illegal, stating that the veteran Sen. Hansen cannot request a recount because she was a write-in candidate and not an official candidate on the ballot. The hearing will take place on Dec. 15 at 9 a.m. at the Superior Court on St. Croix.

Chairman Adelbert Bryan was not present at Friday's recount, neither were members Raymond Williams and Glenn Webster.