

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Plaskett Washington Staff Will Visit Territory To Meet With Agency Heads

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Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett told the *VI Consortium* that her Washington staff will visit the territory this week to meet with agency heads in an effort to get a better understanding of what their needs are in relation to federal assistance.

That's what the congresswoman said during a brief interview on Saturday night at Noche de Bohemia bajo las estrellas, a scholarship fundraiser event hosted by St. Croix's Hispanic Democratic Club at the Comanche Hotel.

"I'll be coming home for a long period of time, and I'm going to be bringing some of my staff from Washington with me, so that we can pin point the exact issues with the local

agencies so that we can go back up to Washington and push those things," she said.

The Delegate has also hit the ground running, creating legislation while in the midst of hiring staff and setting up office, calling her early days "fast and furious."

"There is a lot going on right now, the majority has decided that we would be in session for six weeks, so it's a lot of fleshing out who's going to be on what committees, subcommittees, getting even your offices situated, trying to staff up at the same time, and then trying to put together pieces of legislation related to the committees you're on and other issues that will support the people of the Virgin Islands," she explained.

The U.S. Congress is now controlled by Republicans, and while Plaskett, a Democrat, says it will be difficult to get big items through, like President Obama's fiscal year 2016 budget and symbolic issues, she believes it will be possible to get smaller legislation through Congress.

"I think there will be opportunities for smaller pieces of legislation, as well as the fact that they know it's still a Democratic administration. So, I'll be working through the administration at the agency level to get certain things moving. And I've already had a meeting with the head of the Small Business Administration, with the Secretary of Transportation, as well as Human Services -- I've had separate meetings with them and I'm setting up additional discussions," Plaskett said.

Plaskett also intends to fully use [her seat](#) on the Agriculture Committee to push agendas related to the territory.

"Being on the Committee on Agriculture, what we've been trying to do is find venues within agriculture that supports small business initiatives, infrastructure projects, and education, as well as not just even growing our agriculture, but our seafood and our fishing committee because that's all part of the committee on agriculture," the congresswoman explained.

She continued, "We know that there are certain things like our transportation, our infrastructure, that we're going to be working with the governor, to try and work with the administration to take care of those things, as well."

As it relates to staying connected to the people who elected her into office, Plaskett said she comes home every weekend to not only meet with the people, but even more importantly, to see her family who still lives on St. Croix.

"Congress is out every Thursday, and I try to make it a point to get back home, then I'm usually back on the road by Monday, until we have a recess period, and then I'll be home for a longer period of time," she said.

VI Consortium also asked the delegate about her relationship with the Mapp administration, and whether there had been discussions between them that would see a strategic plan of action moving forward.

"I've had several discussions with the governor, and we're trying to come up with a date that fits everyone's schedules -- including the governor, the Senate, as well as myself -- when we can all sit down and hash through what are the major initiatives, and how we'll

each be working interactively with one another to get that done," she said.

Plaskett said she was "hopeful" that a better future lies ahead for the U.S. Virgin Islands, and expressed excitement about her appointment to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

"It's one of the few places an old prosecutor like me can argue, so the committee that Darrell Issa headed up will be one of the committees I sit on. And what's exciting about that is, the Post Office reports in to them, so I know that's always an issue that our small businesses, as well as every resident is concerned about, so we'll be working on that," Plaskett said.

Feature Image: Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett and husband, Jonathan Smalls at scholarship fundraiser Saturday night on St. Croix.

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