

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Governor Mapp Hosts 'Highly Successful' Meeting With Mitch McConnell

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Governor Kenneth Mapp hosted Republican Mitch McConnell, the U.S. Senate Majority Leader and his wife Elaine Chao, former Secretary of Labor, at Government House in St. Thomas on Sunday.

According to information provided by Government House, the meeting was "highly successful," as McConnell pledged to continue advocating for issues affecting the territory, including Customs and Border Patrol operations and its effects on local business affairs; the delayed issuance of Army Corps of Engineer permits (the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority [is still awaiting final permits](#) before it can turn on its propane conversion project); the level of infrastructure and transportation funding for the

territory's schools and roads; and the resolution of ongoing treasury issues affecting EDC beneficiaries.

"We want the US Virgin Islands to build on our relationship with the United States Government; we want to contribute to a greater partnership, not just ask for assistance," Mapp said.

McConnell, who honeymooned in the Virgin Islands over 20 years ago, said the territory continues to be of interest to him and spoke of the great value he sees in the islands.

The majority leader also made mention of the territory's upcoming Centennial Celebration, which will take place over a 17-month period -- Aug. 2016 through Dec. 2017 -- and commemorates the March 31, 1917 transfer of St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas, by purchase from Denmark for the sum of \$25 million in gold to the United States during World War I. McConnell made known his intentions to fully support the events, and highlighted it as a great time to bring exposure to the territory.

"My wife and I chose the Virgin Islands for our honeymoon twenty-two years ago. We continue to return to St. John and the territory on a regular basis. I see the values here," McConnell said. "With regards to your upcoming Centennial Celebration in 2017, show us your game plan and we will help. This is a tremendous opportunity to showcase the Virgin Islands to the rest of the world. It is your unique time to bring a lot of attention home."

McConnell also invited the governor to his offices in Washington next week, during Mapp's visit to the nation's capital.