

The Virgin Islands Consortium

With 2016 Fast Approaching, Senate Announces Town Halls On Election Reform

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Ernice Gilbert **June 02, 2015**

Reform Before Election



ST. CROIX -- Already halfway into 2015, the 2016 mid-term elections are quickly approaching, and Sen. Kenneth Gittens, Chairman of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary, has announced town hall meetings where the territory's electorate will be given an opportunity to voice their opinions on much-needed election reform, according to a press release Gittens issued on Monday.

The second-term senator initially planned to meet with members of the Joint Boards of Election to commence work on a draft document. However, "in light of a town hall meeting hosted by the board members in the St. Croix district the day before the working sessions will be held, I decided to extend the same courtesy to the electorate on St. John

and St. Thomas to put their views and ideas out in the open ahead of the working meetings as well," Gittens said.

Gittens has scheduled the working sessions for election reform (Title 18 of the Virgin Islands Code) on June 18 and 19. The meetings, according to the senator, are designed to be informal working sessions between the members of the Joint Boards of Election, the staff of the Elections System of the Virgin Islands and the legislators.

But the town halls in St. John and St. Thomas won't prevent Gittens from attending the meetings on St. Croix, as the senator said he wants input from residents in both districts.

"The idea of this working session was brought about during the Committee of the Whole meeting held April 14 on St. Thomas and subsequent discussions where members of the joint board indicated that they were interested in working on changing the election laws with such a meeting," said Gittens.

The town-hall meetings are scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Monday, June 15 at the Legislative Conference Room on St. John; 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 16 at Roy Lester Schneider Hospital Conference Room; and 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 17 at the UVI Great Hall on St. Croix.