

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Senator Blyden Says His Words Were Taken Out Of Context, 'Regrets Misunderstanding'

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ST. THOMAS -- Senator Marvin Blyden came under fire on Wednesday after saying that there were too many female officers in the Virgin Islands Police Department, and that they react "timid" in certain situations.

The freshman senator and top vote-getter in the St. Thomas 2014 senatorial race [made his remarks](#) during a round of questioning in a Committee on Finance hearing at the Frits E. Lawaetz Conference Room on St. Croix, where VIPD officials, including its Commissioner Delroy Richards, Sr., were giving testimony on the department's FY 2016 budget.

"We have too much female officers," he said. "I don't mean to sound discriminatory, but I'm being honest and I'm keeping it real. Because they don't respect them, and many times they are kind of timid to deal with certain situations. It's a fact."

Now, however, through a press release issued late Wednesday following the *VI Consortium* story, Blyden said he was taken out of context.

Making known that he has eight sisters, the first-term senator added that he has no gender bias against women, and that his statements were attempting to highlight the challenges that the VIPD is facing because there were too few males passing police entrance exams.

Blyden, who also made known that one of his sisters was once a police officer, and his sister-in-law is currently serving as an auxiliary officer, said he "strongly" supports "the presence of women in the VIPD."

But the senator did not attempt to clarify why he thought that women in the force were "timid," and failed to give an explanation for stating that there were too many female police officers. In fact, the senator said that the overabundance of women in the force is "one of our problems," and gave no explanation for that statement, either.

After Blyden's comments yesterday, Commissioner Richards said he's seen instances where women were more forceful than their male counterparts.

"I must also add that I have seen some very aggressive female police officers, and I've seen some being more aggressive than male police officers, and I've seen this from both the police perspective and the private industry, so that's why I welcome them," Richards said.

"As long as you're able to meet the qualifications, I don't have an issue with that," he added.

Commissioner Richards said the only strategy in relation to recruitment is for the VIPD, through its PR campaign, to emphasize the qualifications of becoming a police officer and encourage both males and females to attend.