

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Sen. Gittens Denounces Cyber Attacks Perpetrated By Locals Through Facebook Groups

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ST. CROIX -- Chairman of the 31st Legislature's Rules and Judiciary Committee, Sen. Kenneth Gittens, has issued a press release denouncing Facebook groups that are used to anonymously disparage residents.

Gittens said he's grown increasingly concerned with the groups, operated by local residents, and added that the sites are socially and emotionally poisonous and residents should be cognizant of the ramifications that some of their postings can have on the lives of others.

"Very often I am left with my mouth wide open when I see some of the malicious attacks being made on some of these social media pages or in some of these groups. Many of these groups were designed under the guise that they are about promoting positivity in our community and highlighting and creating solutions for social and economic ills, but that has not been the case," Senator Gittens said.

The senator, a former police officer and current vice chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, said some individuals in the community take pride in breaking down others with no regards to those who may be hurt in the process.

"I saw a post where the administrator of a social media group posted a picture that included a very progressive young man, who had recently received acknowledgement for his outstanding community services and dedication. Through a callous attack on the governor, this young man has been dragged into what can be a damaging or even socially crippling situation," Gittens said. The senator later told *The Consortium* via email that he was referring to the Facebook group dubbed [Virgin Islands Think Tank](#) and the person who controls it, Phillip Maxx.

He added: "We are in an age where predators are everywhere and attacks can have lasting effects emotionally and even financially. We have to be, and act responsibly while protecting ourselves and our children."

To close, Gittens, who comes from a local and federal law enforcement background, warned those perpetrating these acts to remember that their actions too can come with consequences that could leave them criminally or civilly liable.

"Hiding behind a computer does not make anyone mysterious or untouchable, we must all be responsible in our actions and help to protect the innocent," he concluded.