

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gittens Says Bennett Is Being 'Deceptive,' Credibility 'Shattered'

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Ernice Gilbert **July 21, 2015**



Acting Property and Procurement Commissioner Randolph Bennett will face the full Senate on Thursday where his fate as the head of Property and Procurement will be determined.

ST. CROIX -- Senator Kenneth Gittens, chairman of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary, made known via a press release issued on Monday that a letter addressed to him by Acting Property and Procurement Commissioner Randolph Bennett attempting to give justification to comments Bennett made during a recent Senate session, has done nothing to change Gittens' stance that Bennett "stretched the truth" when he testified

under oath that he'd completed his master's degree, and all he needed to do was "walk across the stage."

"I'm not certain why Mr. Bennett continues to defend his statements of having possessed such degree because we have already received information from Liberty University that he does not hold a master's degree from their institution of higher learning. My office received an email letter from Mr. Bennett, which was copy furnished to all senators, dated July 15, 2015, where he attempted to explain his position again. It is my position, however, that the documents we have received are clear that he does not have a master's degree. For him to continue defending his statement of having a Master's is simply being deceptive," Senator Gittens said.

The information received from Gittens, seen [here](#), is reproduced verbatim immediately below:

July 14

Student: Randolph Bennett

ID #L23728166

Randolph Bennett is currently in his counseling internship and once he successfully completes the internship he will have met all requirements for his Master of Arts in Professional Counseling (60 hr) and is anticipated to graduate September 21, 2015.

If additional information is needed, please contact the Registrar's Office.

Sincerely,

Ashley Sears

Verification Officer

Last week, Bennett [tried to explain](#) in his letter to Gittens that he had indeed completed the required courses to earn the degree; a departure from his own comments at the hearing that gave the impression that Bennett could collect his master's degree diploma at anytime.

"Although I have completed the requirements for the internship portion, it is not reflected because the term has not ended," Bennett wrote in the letter, dated July 15.

"Notwithstanding, I am still in completion of the graduate requirements as shown in the audit report stating "Graduate". The next window of diploma processing will be in September and my diploma will be sent then."

Gittens said the letter also reflected that Bennett has not completed the requirements as shown on his University Audit Report. The second-term St. Croix Democrat said he contacted Bennett after receiving the documents from Liberty University and he explained to him that according to the documents a master's degree had not been conferred on him because he had not completed all the requirements.

"Mr. Bennett contradicted himself several times, not only during testimony on July 13th but also in his letter addressed to me on July 15th. All I could truly say is - I'm disappointed. Disappointed because Mr. Bennett comes highly qualified according to his

portfolio, but his character and credibility has been called into question and is shattered in my book. What else would he be evasive and not completely forthcoming about? The position he is tapped to fill requires transparency, accountability and fairness by someone who understands our procurement laws and has the ability to be truthful and make the right decisions,” Senator Gittens concluded.

Although the Rules committee forwarded Bennett's nomination to the full Senate with a favorable nod, it's expected to face strong opposition following the events currently unfolding that call his character into question.

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