

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Meets With Mitch McConnell, U.S. Senate Majority Leader

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ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp met with U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell at Government House here on Sunday, albeit briefly. A press release Government House issued late Sunday said the meeting was centered around issues relative to the territory, which may involve congressional consideration.

Immediately following the meeting, Mr. Mapp accompanied Mr. McConnell to a luncheon at the Old Stone Farmhouse, where invited guests were addressed by the senator and their questions entertained, according to the release.

During the exchanges, Mr. McConnell stated that the Senate would not consider a U.S. Supreme Court nominee to succeed the late Justice Antonin Scalia until after the next president takes office. "The American people should have a voice in the selection of their next Supreme Court Justice. Therefore, this vacancy should not be filled until we have a new president," Mr. McConnell said in a statement released immediately following Justice Scalia's death.

Multiple Republican senators said they supported the Senate majority leader's position, potentially denying President Barack Obama a chance to reconfigure the ideological makeup of the court in the last year of his second term. If Mr. Obama's nomination were to be confirmed, major laws in America would most likely shift to a more liberal path.

"I don't see anyone getting confirmed," said Senator Mike Lee (via NY Times), a Utah Republican who sits on the Judiciary Committee, which would consider any nomination. "I suspect that probably means no hearings." Senators Ted Cruz of Texas and Marco Rubio of Florida, both Republican presidential contenders, echoed that view in television appearances on Sunday.

According to Government House release, Mr. McConnell was joined in the territory by his wife, Elaine L. Chao, a former secretary of Labor during the George W. Bush administration. The Senate is currently on recess for the Presidents Day holiday.