

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Citing The Exclusion Of Over 4,000 Votes In The St. Thomas-St. John District, A.G. Walker Refuses To Close Investigation Into 2012 Election

Politics / **Published On March 10, 2016 10:51 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **March 10, 2016**



ST. THOMAS -- In a letter addressed to Attorney General Claude Walker and dated Feb. 25, 2016, Chairwoman of the St. Croix Board of Elections, Lilliana Belardo de ONeal, requested that the Department of Justice exonerate St. Croix board members from an ongoing inquiry into the 2012 General Election, and from being part of any alleged wrongdoing.

But in a response dated March 7, Mr. Walker told the chairwoman that although most of the alleged tampering appear to have been done in the St. Thomas-St. John district,

"I cannot at this time, in good conscience, issue any report exonerating the St. Croix District Board from being part of any possible or alleged wrongdoing pertaining to the 2012 election."

Mr. Walker said after reviewing the report prepared by former Attorney General Vincent Frazer "we are deeply troubled by glaring omissions in that report as to the cause of these disturbing underlying facts concerning several certifications conducted by the St. Thomas/St. John District in 2012."

Mr. Walker listed three 2012 races where a total of 4,136 votes were omitted: 2,965 votes were not included in the Board of Elections race; 499 votes were not included in the delegate to Congress race; and 672 votes were not included in the Board of Education race.

"Indeed, the disenfranchisement concerns of the public are well-founded as lawful voters in the U.S. Virgin Islands must not be denied their right as voters when they have made a genuine effort to comply with Virgin Islands voting laws," Mr. Walker said.

"All legal voters in the Virgin Islands possess the right to express their free choice in an election, and their votes cannot illegally be rejected by election officials. Virgin Islands voters who have cast their ballots, in good faith, must not be disenfranchised or dispossessed of their right to vote because of the possibility of fraud, incompetence, or carelessness of Virgin Islands election officials," he added.

The attorney general said while he understands that the St. Croix board wants closure, there remains more questions than answers in the report, and has therefore chosen to keep the investigation open "until it is totally satisfied as to why some Virgin Islands voters were completely disenfranchised in the 2012 election, and the implementation of tangible procedures to minimize the occurrence of the 2012 election debacle in the St. Thomas/St. John District."