

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## John Canegata Moves Ahead Of Himself And Causes More Confusion In Local GOP Caucus

Politics / **Published On March 23, 2016 10:02 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **March 23, 2016**



**John Canegata**

ST. CROIX -- As if the local Republican Party's caucus, which was [held on March 10](#), wasn't confusing enough after local stalwarts were defeated by newcomers to the territory, the party's chairman, [former gubernatorial candidate](#) John Canegata, has updated the caucus results which now says John P. Yob, Gwen Brady, Warren B. Cole, Erica L. Yob, George Logan and Lindsey Eilon -- all of whom were uncommitted delegates -- failed to comply with a party rule and therefore have been rendered ineligible.

According to a press release issued on Tuesday by the local GOP, under rule 11 of the Rules of the Virgin Islands Republican Party GOP National Convention Caucus, elected delegates had five days to “confirm, in writing, that he or she accepts election” and that they are “willing and able” to attend the 2016 Republican National Convention to be held in Cleveland, Ohio. The aforementioned candidates, the release argues, had failed to state whether they could attend and have therefore been disqualified.

“Rule 11 automatically disqualifies and strikes from the Virgin Islands delegation to the Republican National Convention anyone who fails to comply with party rules,” said Mr. Canegata. “The party rules commanded me to inform the Republican National Committee of this automatic action, which I did in a letter to chairman Reince Priebus.”

But in a [widely circulated response](#), Mr. Yob -- a political operative that understands the innards of elections, who has written a book about contested political conventions; owns a Michigan-based consulting firm called Strategic National; and is a former national political director for former Republican presidential candidate Rand Paul -- assailed Mr. Canegata and said that he, as well as the other candidates that Mr. Canegata declared ineligible, remain qualified.

And a court battle brought by Supervisor of Elections Caroline Fawkes against Mr. Yob to determine whether Mr. Yob and his wife, Erica L. Yob, were eligible to run for office or vote in the territory has produced pleasing results for the defendants, as the court granted Mr. Yob a preliminary injunction against Ms. Fawkes, according to a statement on Mr. Yob's Facebook page.

"The Chairman is not a dictator and can not unilaterally break the U.S.V.I. GOP rules to hand-select his preferred delegates," Mr. Yob said. "He has unfortunately decided once again to either not read the rules or not follow the rules. Either way, it is clear that the 5-day period is after notification that follows the certification of the election by the certification committee. The dispute committee has not yet resolved the disputes, the certification committee has not yet certified the results of the election, we have not yet been notified following the certification, and therefore we will all still be delegates pending the official certification of the certification committee. We are confident we will be properly certified by the certification committee."

Further bolstering his claims, Mr. Yob [posted a screenshot](#) on his Facebook page of a statement issued by Certification Committee Member Jim Oliver, which stands in stark contrast to Mr. Canegata's claims.

"I am a member of the Certification Subcommittee of the Virgin Islands Republican Caucus, appointed pursuant to rule 11 of the Rules of the Virgin Islands Republican Caucus. Under those rules, final certification of the results of the caucus cannot be made until receipt of a report from the Dispute Subcommittee under Rule 10. No report from the Dispute Subcommittee has yet been received," Mr. Oliver wrote. "Accordingly, no notification of selection has been given, or could yet be given, to the delegates and alternates under Rule 11. Accordingly, the five-day time period for acceptance as delegates has not yet begun to run, and will not begin to run until such written notice is given by the Certification Subcommittee. No persons have been or could be disqualified from serving as delegates or alternates by reason of any failure to confirm in writing a willingness and ability to attend the upcoming Republican National Convention."

Even so, Mr. Canegata's press release listed alternate delegates David Johnson (uncommitted), Valerie Stiles (Rubio), Andrea Lee Moeekel (uncommitted), Humberto O'Neal (Rubio), Steven K. Hardy (Trump) and Robert Max Schanfarber (Cruz) as candidates who "complied with rule 11," and therefore, "Under rule 12, they were automatically elevated to fill the six delegate vacancies."

Asked by The Consortium about Mr. Yob's statement, Mr. Canegata said he was working on a new press release and would be in touch with us by late Tuesday. This publication has yet to receive any updated information from Mr. Canegata.

*Feature Image: John Canegata, then-lieutenant governor candidate with Soraya Diase-Coffelt, being interviewed by The Consortium in 2014 at Point Udall.*

*Image Credit: VIC.*