

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Congressional Black Caucus Joins Plaskett In Call For President Obama To Visit U.S.V.I.

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ST. CROIX -- The Congressional Black Caucus joined Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett in encouraging President Barack Obama to visit the U.S. Virgin Islands before the end of his term this year, a press release Ms. Plaskett's office issued late Friday made known.

In a letter addressed to the president on Friday, members of the Congressional Black Caucus highlighted the historical significance of the Virgin Islands to both the Caribbean and the United States, and stated their support for the president to make an historic official visit to the territory, according to the release.

"I am really grateful to have the support of my colleagues in this effort. Their support to the people of the territory and the issues we face is meaningful in many ways and I will continue to work tirelessly toward growing support among my other colleagues in Congress," Ms. Plaskett said. "When I invited my colleagues to the territory last month, one of my goals was to have leaders in Washington see, first-hand, the challenges, as well as the opportunities that exist here in the territory. We thought that it would be beneficial to have allies in our effort to heighten awareness to the needs of the territory in the Washington discourse."

In their letter, C.B.C. members also highlighted the Mr. Obama's leadership in drawing attention to historical mistreatment to the territories and to other areas across the world and urged the president not to forget the Virgin Islands and its often overlooked disparities.

The letter comes less than a year ahead of the Virgin Islands commemorating the centennial anniversary of becoming a territory of the United States.

Ms. Plaskett said that the March 31, 2017 anniversary presents a great opportunity for Virgin Islanders to look back at the history of the territory under United States jurisdiction and evaluate its position going forward.

"The coming centennial anniversary gives us a platform to have meaningful dialogue around our history with the United States, our enormous contributions and the genesis of the issues affecting our territory today, as well as how we solve them and the direction of our Virgin Islands going forward," she said. "I believe that conversation should not just be had amongst ourselves, but should include the president and the Congress as well. I am hoping that the support of my colleagues will help reverberate the importance of a presidential visit in this context."

Ms. Plaskett invited President Obama to visit the Virgin Islands in January, the release concluded.