

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Some V.I.P.D. Officers Strike On J'ouvert Morning; Sen. Francis Condemns Action

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ST. THOMAS -- Senator Novelle Francis Jr. on Thursday denounced the actions of V.I.P.D. officers who are claiming what is being called the "Blue Flu" during the height of the carnival season. According to a release issued by Mr. Francis' office, the senator learned on Thursday that many officers did not report to work and called in sick. Mr. Francis said he was particularly concerned because law enforcement's practice for ensuring a safe J'ouvert and carnival requires all able personnel to support policing and safety initiatives.

"I am disappointed in those officers who chose today to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the Virgin Islands Police Department, especially at a time when all hands are

needed on deck," Mr. Francis said. "We have seen in the past how the revelry of J'ouvert can rapidly shift to violence. In my experience, a strong and visible police presence can help to ensure that the fun and safety of residents and visitors alike is not marred by violence."

The release says Mr. Francis had yet to receive details that led to the officers' action, but maintained that their decision not to report to work during the height of carnival does not honor the code of sworn personnel.

"Law enforcement officers are supposed to be their brother's keepers. The officers involved in today's blue flu have not only violated that code, but jeopardized the safety of their fellow officers," he said.

Mr. Francis, who chairs the Senate's Committee on Homeland Security, Public Safety and Justice, also commended St. Croix V.I.P.D. officers and law enforcement officers from other agencies who have worked alongside personnel of the St. Thomas/St. John district to ensure police coverage during the carnival season.