

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Republicans Nominate Challenger To Stacey Plaskett, Reelects Canegata As Chairman

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ST. THOMAS -- The Republican Party of the Virgin Islands, in a convention held at the Windward Passage Saturday, nominated a candidate to challenge Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett in November. The party also reelected current Chairman John Canegata to continue serving in his current capacity, as well as selecting multiple other candidates to challenge several Senate and board seats during the November General Election.

But Saturday's convention and the victorious candidates may hit a roadblock well before voting in the territory starts. The Joint Board of Elections [on June 1](#) voted not to accept a petition from Mr. Canegata, who asked that the party's candidates be allowed to participate even after missing May 17 deadline to submit.

And there's also another problem: On May 28 at the same location here, there was a call to convention by a group of Republicans, to include former Senator Holland Redfield, James Oliver, Herbert Schoenbohm, Warren B. Cole and others. There, they elected 28 members to the Territorial Committee and replaced Mr. Canegata as chairman of the party with Mr. Cole.

To that group, yesterday's convention was moot; contending that their convention had more delegate participation -- 28, compared to Saturday's 21.

The party nominated St. Thomas businessman Gordon Ackley as Ms. Plaskett's challenger in November. Ms. Plaskett is [already facing a challenge](#) from former Senator Ronald Russell.

"I'm running because we need a congressman who can get things done—a congressman who can deliver for the Virgin Islands," Mr. Ackley told delegates after being selected as the G.O.P.'s nominee for Congress, according to a press release Mr. Canegata issued late Saturday. "This isn't about party. My candidacy is about people, not politics. It's about being an effective voice for the Virgin Islands in Congress."

Mr. Ackley, who said he helped Ms. Plaskett in 2014, added that the current delegate "isn't getting the job done."

"We need a congressman who can deliver so our children and grandchildren have a better, brighter future," he said. "The problem is Congresswoman Plaskett and Democrats can't deliver for the Virgin Islands because Republicans control Congress. As our next congressman, I can deliver for the Virgin Islands because I will be in the majority party—that is, the governing party."

The part also nominated four candidates for the Legislature: Tim Daly, Vince Danet and Eloi George from the St. Thomas-St. John district and Robert Moorhead from the St. Croix district.

Jevon Williams, a 29-year-old Army National Guard veteran who immigrated to the United States as a teenager, replaced Holland Redfield in yesterday's convention. And Lilliana Belardo de O'Neil, a former senator and currently the chairwoman of the St. Croix Board of Elections, was re-elected as national committeewoman. Incumbent Lawrence Boschulte and challenger Robert Max Schanfarber, the Territorial Committee secretary and a local businessman, were nominated for the St. Thomas-St. John Board of Elections, according to Mr. Canegata's release.

St. Croix resident Marion Baptise was also nominated for the St. Croix Board of Education.

The release says delegates also heard from Republican National Committee co-chairwoman Sharon Day, who addressed the convention via video. She thanked the party for working with mainland Republicans to unite and defeat Democrats in the general election.

Following the convention, the new members of the Territorial Committee met in an organizational meeting and re-elected April Newland, a St. Thomas real estate agent, as party vice chairman and Mr. Schanfarber as party secretary. St. Croix's Andrea Lee

Moeckel was unanimously elected treasurer, according to Mr. Canegata.

The nominees will be filed with the Election System on Monday.

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