

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Local Republican Party Files Lawsuit Against Caroline Fawkes And Elections System

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ST. THOMAS -- The Virgin Islands Republican Party, along with its Republican candidate for Delegate to Congress Gordon Ackley, on Friday filed a federal lawsuit against Supervisor of Elections Caroline Fawkes and the Elections System for what the party described as the disenfranchisement of Mr. Ackley "and thousands of registered Republican voters across the Virgin Islands" by Ms. Fawke's and the Elections System's refusal to conduct a Republican primary election.

The lawsuit follows a Joint Board of Elections [decision not to certify Republican candidates](#) for the primary election at a June 1 meeting, ahead of the local party's June 11 convention, with a majority of board members arguing that the May 17 deadline for

filing had past, and allowing the G.O.P. to move forward would set a dangerous precedent.

The board's decision left only Democratic candidates in today's primary election.

The Joint Board voted on March 18 to hold primaries only for public offices, and left party office elections for the respective parties. A formal letter, however, was only sent to party leaders on May 5, leaving little time for the parties to prepare.

A lawsuit filed by the Democratic Party, which the party won, mandated that the Elections System hold primaries for both public and party offices.

"The actions of the defendants not only have the effect of violating the rights of Mr. Ackley and the Republican Party but also cast serious doubts on the ability of defendants to hold a fair and meaningful election in the U.S. Virgin Islands," the complaint, filed in District Court, states. "The conduct on the part of the defendants has and continues to have the effect of violating the First Amendment and voting rights of citizens of the U.S. Virgin Islands."

Mr. Ackley won the Republican congressional nomination during the Republican Territorial Convention on June 11. He and the Republican Party are requesting that the court either issue an order directing defendants to hold a Republican primary election or an order placing Mr. Ackley on the general election ballot.

Other Republican candidates nominated at the Republican Territorial Convention were Tim Daly, Vince Danet and Eloi George for the Legislature from the St. Thomas-St. John District, Robert Moorhead for the Legislature from the St. Croix District, Lilliana Belardo de O'Neal and Jevon Williams for the St. Croix Board of Elections, Lawrence Boschulte and Robert Max Schanfarber for the St. Thomas Board of Elections, and Marion Baptiste for the St. Croix Board of Elections.