

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Department Of Justice To Launch Investigation Into 'Chucky' Hansen's Name Legality

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Acting Attorney General Claude E. Walker.

ST. CROIX -- The Virgin Islands Department of Justice, acting on a request by the St. Croix Board of Elections that the candidacy of former Senator Alicia Hansen, whose birth name is Alden Alicia Pickering, said it would launch an investigation to determine whether Mrs. Hansen is eligible to be on the November 2106 ballot, based on the legality or lack thereof of her name.

But while D.O.J. has agreed to investigate the matter, Attorney General Claude Walker, in a [response letter](#) issued to St. Croix Board of Elections Chairwoman Lilliana Belardo de O'Neal, said that the D.O.J.'s investigation would go well past a September 16 deadline referenced in the chairwoman's letter dated September 6, and that the D.O.J.'s investigation, while ongoing, could not serve as a legal basis to bar Mrs. Hansen from being on the ballot.

"As a result, the Board of Elections will have to formalize its decision on whether the candidate should be removed from the ballot before the September 16, 2016 deadline," Mr. Walker wrote. "If the sole basis of the candidate's removal from the ballot is the Democratic Party's affidavit of challenge, then that affidavit fails to give B.O.E. sufficient grounds to remove the candidate's name from the ballot."

Mr. Walker said B.O.E. should address the matter of Mrs. Hansen being on the ballot based on its own investigation and evaluation of Mrs. Hansen's registration, credentials and other documentation presented, providing that the board, "determine the candidate's qualifications; notifies the candidate, in writing, of its determination and outlining the reasons for any decision; and gives the candidate an opportunity to be heard."

What has become a complex matter involving the names of Mrs. Hansen and her eligibility to be a candidate on the November General Election ballot, started when Mrs. Hansen decided to make her moniker, "Chucky", her official middle name. The change was prompted by an updated Virgin Islands law that says candidates running for office can either choose to place on election ballots their first and last name, or their moniker and last name; not both.

Mrs. Hansen wanted both, so she went to the Superior Court -- with birth paper documents revealing her name to be Alden Alicia Pickering -- to make the change legal.

In her July 12 petition, Mrs. Hansen told the court the name change was to "make all of my documents consistent with the name I've been known as for all my life, that is reflected on my United States passport, and that the public is familiar with as a senator and politician for the last 25 years."

But the petition did not address why a name that the same petition did not recognize as her legal name has been used for so many years.

On August 31, the St. Croix Board of Elections [voted to remove](#) Mrs. Hansen from the November General Election ballot. They also voted to request an investigation into Mrs. Hansen's eligibility to be a candidate, contending that the issues surrounding her name were to be carefully looked at by the Department of Justice, more pointedly Attorney General Claude Walker's office, which would then determine whether Mrs. Hansen had committed fraud and should be permanently banned from this year's ballot, or whether she should be allowed to run.

A motion made by board member Raymond Williams following the successful vote to remove Mrs. Hansen from the ballot, also blocked Elections Supervisor Caroline Fawkes from sending St. Croix ballots to be printed before being authorized by the board; a move aimed at stymieing any move by the supervisor to ignore the board's decision.

But at a press conference held at Gertrude's Restaurant on September 1, Mrs. Hansen [pledged to defend her candidacy](#), emphatically stating her name as Alicia "Chucky" Hansen, and contending that the controversy was one made to derail her chances of being elected by the Virgin Islands Democratic Party.

"There is no other than Alicia Chucky Hansen," she began, moving on to thank her supporters for their relentless passion and unwavering stance. "I want to say to you that we knew that when we decided to join this race, we were fully aware that the opposition would try something — anything — to try to block us from being on the ballot."

Far from done is Mrs. Hansen's fight. She said she had retained attorney Lee Rohn to battle her cause in court, and would take whatever legal avenues there were to be on the November General Election ballot.

The former senator, revealing that she had never met her biological father, also tried to explain the controversy surrounding her names, stating that her adopted parents, whose last name was Hansen, took her from a young age and gave her their surname. She cited Virgin Islands Code, stating that the law makes clear that a candidate does not need to have on the ballot his or her name listed as is on the birth certificate; one could either use their moniker and surname, or legal first name and surname, not both. This very issue was [discussed at a June St. Croix Board of Elections meeting](#). Mrs. Hansen noted that the law also makes clear that the name one registers as, is the name that must be used. What she did not state, though, is that that name first must be accepted as legal. In dispute is whether Alicia "Chucky" Hansen is legal at all, since Mrs. Hansen's birth name, which she petitioned the Superior Court to change in July, remains Alden Alicia Pickering.

Mrs. Hansen then pointed to her husband of 40 years, and said she had the marriage certificate to prove it. Taking her word for it, Mrs. Hansen's legal name — barring any changes that she might have made at that time — should have been Alden Alicia Hansen after receiving her husband's last name. The senator also provided a certification document from Miguel A. Rodriguez, special assistant to the secretary of education in Puerto Rico, which she says backs up her claim that she had been called Alicia Hansen after being adopted.

That document, however, lists Mrs. Hansen as [Alicia Hansen Calendario](#).

Pressed after her talk for clarity, Mrs. Hansen reiterated what she said from the onset: that from her adoption, she had been known as Alicia Hansen, even though her birth paper said Alden Alicia Pickering.