

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VIPD Warns Against Vandalism Of Political Signs

Crime / **Published On October 12, 2016 10:26 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **October 12, 2016**



ST. CROIX -- The Virgin Islands Police Department on Wednesday reminded residents that vandalism of political signs is a criminal offense, and that the V.I.P.D. would enforce the law "to the fullest extent." The force issued the warning following the vandalism of multiple political signs in recent days on this island.

Vandalism is "action involving deliberate destruction of property; defacing, damaging and graffiti," Police Commissioner Delroy Richards said. "The various candidates and their supporters have a Constitutional right to voice their opinion and destroying signs is a violation of this right."

In a press release also issued Tuesday, Senator Kenneth Gittens said the ongoing destruction not only puts a damper on the ongoing election process, but also reiterated the commissioner's stance that the action was a violation of local law.

"Things sometimes get nasty during election time locally and even across the nation, and it is something that we all brace for, but I've never seen anything like this before," Mr. Gittens said. "It's not just me either; there are other candidates that are having problems with their signs being torn down, cut up or stolen. It has to stop because these signs cost money and it chisels away at resources every time we have to go out and repair or replace a sign."

Senator Kurt Vialet told The Consortium this afternoon that the situation was a sad reflection on the state of politics in the territory.

"It's senseless. I don't understand what anybody is able to achieve by going around and destroying other candidates' signs. The race is supposed to be based on your platform and your performance, and what you have been able to accomplish," Mr. Vialet said. "To drive around and see all of this destruction it's a shame. And that's not fair, and it's adult vandalism. It's a sad reflection as to how some people address politics in the Virgin Islands."

Both Mr. Vialet and Mr. Gittens observed that only Democratic candidates' signs were being defaced.

The V.I.P.D. is urging anyone with information that may lead to the arrest of vandalism perpetrators to call 340 774 2211 in St. Thomas, or 340 778 2211 in St. Croix.