

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gittens Warns Against Celebratory Gunfire On New Year's Eve

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ST. CROIX -- Senator Kenneth Gittens, vice-chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety this week reminded residents that as they ring in the New Year at midnight Saturday and into Sunday morning, they should refrain from the illegal discharge of firearms, according to a press release issued from Mr. Gittens's office. A similar warning was issued by the Virgin Islands Police Department [earlier this week](#).

"We are supposed to be ringing in the New Year with fireworks not gunfire and that is what I want our residents to remember as they go out to celebrate Saturday night into Sunday morning when we usher in 2017," the outgoing senator said. "What goes up must come down and this also applies to bullets fired into the air."

Mr. Gittens said he wants residents and visitors to the islands to take celebratory gunfire very seriously and not participate in it at any cost. He said this is a practice carried out by a few people and it is an offense that he has warned against for years and this year is no different as gun possession and gun use seem to be a growing trend.

"I've remained adamant against this practice even by licensed firearms holders. If you make the conscious decision to compromise the safety of others by firing a gun into the air, I know the men and women of the Virgin Islands Police Department are going to be vigilant while responding to calls for service. Shooting guns anywhere in a reckless manner is illegal and has major consequences, Those who normally do this need to decide if keeping with the urban culture or street norm is worth it," Mr. Gittens said.

Finally, as he leaves office and as the new year beckons, Mr. Gittens wished everyone a great evening celebrating in whichever way that they choose and asked them to enjoy the festivities, put safety first and do everything in moderation.

"I wish everyone a very safe, prosperous and happy New Year and a year filled with social, spiritual and economic growth," Mr. Gittens concluded.