

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Senate Session Being Held Today In Attempt To Fix Gittens-Sponsored Election Law

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ST. THOMAS -- Members of the 32nd Legislature will meet in session at the Earl B. Ottley Legislative Hall at 10:00 a.m. today to address loopholes in Act No. 7892, in order to meet the [April 8 deadline for a special election called by Governor Kenneth Mapp](#) to fill the vacant 15th Senate seat, the office of Senate President Myron Jackson made known via press release on Monday.

According to the release, there are two bills being considered: Bill No. 32-0017, an Act amending Title 18 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 3, section 41 and repealing Act No. 7892, a measure that was sponsored by former Senator Kenneth Gittens, which created the single Board of Elections. The other measure is Bill No. 32-0022, an Act appropriating

\$140,000 to fund the special election.

“We’re fixing the deficiencies,” Mr. Jackson said in a release issued last week. “Whether we repeal the legislation or make amendments, we will be addressing the special election.”

According to Rule 201 (d) of the Legislature, the president may convene regular session at the president’s discretion, but not after adjournment *sine die*, or not without assigning a day for a further meeting or hearing. According to last week's release, there are several conflicts with the current law, as outlined in an opinion from District Court Judge Curtis Gomez, [issued two weeks ago](#).

Invited testifiers include Elections Supervisor Caroline Fawkes; Arturo Watlington, chairman of the St. Thomas-St. John Board of Elections, Attorney General Claude Walker, Nellon Bowry, director of the Office of Budget and Management, Barbara McIntosh, vice-chair of the St. Croix Board of Elections, and Department of Finance Commissioner Valdamier Collens.