

The Virgin Islands Consortium

April 8 Special Election To Move Forward As Rodriguez Gets Denied Again

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Kevin Rodriguez

ST. THOMAS -- The April 8 special election will move forward after U.S. District Court Judge Curtis Gomez denied a motion by Kevin Rodriguez to stay or delay the election while [an appeal of the matter was ongoing](#).

The Wednesday four-page ruling was yet another blow for Mr. Rodriguez, [who was barred from being seated in the 32nd Legislature](#) by the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands because of residency discrepancies.

The would-be senator has appealed the case to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, and in a letter addressed to the St. Thomas Board of Election -- which was discussed at a meeting last week -- Mr. Rodriguez's attorney, Francis Jackson, argued on the behalf of his client that the special election would cause Mr. Rodriguez "irreparable harm," as it would make naught his own election. Mr. Francis said the board should wait until a decision is reached by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. However, the board said it would move forward while remaining pliable in light of the appeal.

Budget issues for hosting the election were also discussed at the board meeting; Elections Supervisor Caroline Fawkes, [during a Senate session](#) dealing with the special election and board unification matters, reduced the Election System's original request of \$140,000 to \$100,000, a move made in light of the government's financial crisis. On Tuesday, she relayed some of her cost cutting ideas to the board, including printing ballots without pictures — even though it's required by law — for about 30 percent of registered voters. With pictures, the ballots would cost \$8,000, while without the cost would be shaved in half. Even so, board members said they would try to comply with the law by using smaller images.

Confirmed polling places for the special election in St. Thomas include the Charlotte Amalie High School, Charles Turnbull Library, Gladys Abraham Elementary School, Addelita Cancryn Junior High School, and the Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School. In St. John, the board has designated the Julius Sprauve School as the polling place.