

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Millin Young: Mapp Should Be Rebuked For Suggesting He Would Not Follow Law

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ST. THOMAS -- Senator Janette Millin Young on Monday chided Governor Kenneth Mapp for his assertion that he would not implement a law that seeks to turn the West Indian Company Limited (W.I.C.O.), into a museum -- even if the Senate decided to override his veto. The governor pointed to questionable language in the measure as the reasoning behind his would-be decision.

"I cannot approve this measure as drafted nor would I implement this measure if the Senate chooses to override my veto," Mr. Mapp said.

Mrs. Millin Young swiftly assailed the governor, and said that the Senate, along with residents of the territory, should join together in rebuking him.

"I read the governor's comments in his [veto override message](#) carefully. And, I believe no one in this territory should take his last comment lightly in which he stated, 'I cannot approve this measure as drafted nor would I implement this measure if the Senate chooses to override my veto.'

"This statement shows his utter disdain and disrespect for the Legislature and the people it represents. Senators and the public should join together in rebuking the notion that a governor -- a chief executive -- can publicly state that he will choose what laws he will follow. He needs to understand, unequivocally, that the U.S. Virgin Islands, as all U.S. jurisdictions, abide by two major doctrines - - separation of powers and checks and balances," Mrs. Millin Young said.

She explained how the system of government is supposed to work, reminding that the legislative branch makes laws while the executive branch enforces the laws.

"The attitude that a chief executive can opt not to enforce the laws that the legislature passes is beyond unacceptable," she said. "Worse, if the governor's attitude is not checked immediately, it will embolden him to believe that he is above the law."

"Even U.S. President Donald Trump does not have the power to ignore or just not to enforce the laws that Congress has passed," Mrs. Millin Young went on. "And, as the entire world can see, even President Trump can be checked by the Judicial Branch and Congress."

As for the governor's veto of the W.I.C.O. measure which Mrs. Millin Young sponsored, the senator said while she was "disturbed but not surprised" by Mr. Mapp's rejection of the bill, she would not immediately request an override from her colleagues, but will instead work through areas of the measure that need amending.

The bill would have allowed W.I.C.O. to sell the mansion to the government using taxes that W.I.C.O. owes to the government as an offset. According to W.I.C.O.'s new CEO, Clifford Graham — who testified at the hearing in favor of the sale — the company owes the government \$6.65 million in taxes.

Mr. Mapp, however, in his veto message, said the \$6.65 million amount was "arbitrary," and asked Senate President Myron Jackson how the Senate determined the property's appraised value.

"What recourse does W.I.C.O. have if the property is valued more than or less than this amount?" Mr. Mapp asked.

Even so, Mrs. Millin Young contended that the bill "would pave the way for the conversion of the historic mansion at Estate Catherineberg to create a modern museum and to develop an attractive cultural center to improve our tourism brand." She said that an improved complex would assist in the revitalization of downtown Charlotte Amalie, which she said has been a long-term plan of both public and private sector leaders.

She said the measure also attempts to resolve the financial contradictions between the government and W.I.C.O..

"For the record, W.I.C.O. owes taxes to the Virgin Islands Government and in the transfer proposal, W.I.C.O. transfers Catherineberg to the Government of the Virgin Islands," Mrs. Millin Young explained. "And, as the current Chief Executive Officer Clifford Graham testified in committee, an appraisal would be conducted should the bill be passed by the Legislature and approved by the governor. W.I.C.O. supported the creation of the museum. So did several other arts and cultural experts in the community who have seen the historic and economic development potential for such an initiative," Mrs. Millin Young argued.

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