

The Virgin Islands Consortium

In Left-Field Announcement, Millin Young Says Rodriguez Should Be Seated Before Tuesday Session

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ST. THOMAS -- Senator Janette Millin Young threw a curveball in the matter of Senator-elect Kevin Rodriguez on Friday, stating that the 32nd Legislature should first seat Mr. Rodriguez as a senator, and only then would it have the authority to act on the matter of his eligibility to be a member of the 32nd body.

Her announcement exposes the senator's stance even before the upcoming Tuesday Senate session, where testifiers, among the Kevin Rodriguez himself and Janelle Sarauw, are to speak on their behalfs. But Mrs. Millin Young was sure to point out that her announcement did not mean that she was taking sides.

"I am not taking sides, and I refuse to politicize the matter," she said, adding, "senators cannot judge just anyone, but rather we can solely judge our members as per the Revised Organic Act of 1954."

Mrs. Millin Young said that following the [Third Circuit Court of Appeals ruling](#), all injunctions against Mr. Rodriguez are now dissolved. Therefore, she went on, "it is the statutory obligation of the 32nd Legislature to swear in Board of Elections certified and Senator-elect Kevin Rodriguez."

But her position appears not to fully align with that of the appellate court's ruling, which says in part, "Thus, under the plain language of § 6(g) [of the Revised Organic Act], once the 32nd Legislature convened, it alone had the authority to determine whether Rodriguez possessed the qualifications to be a member and was thereby entitled to take the oath and be seated." The appellate court did not say that Mr. Rodriguez should be seated; instead, it said only the 32nd Legislature has the authority to decide whether Mr. Rodriguez possessed the necessary qualifications to be a member. Once that is determined, then the body, according to the court, should move to either seat the beleaguered senator-elect, or deem him ineligible. Mrs. Millin Young's stance sees an opposite order: seat Mr. Rodriguez and then determine his fate.

Mrs. Millin Young said the swearing-in of Mr. Rodriguez should be marked as the next item on the Tuesday session agenda after the prayer. "It is my hope that the leadership requests a special prayer on Tuesday morning that asks for us to use wisdom and understanding in the best interest of all Virgin Islanders," she said. "After the prayer, I expect the president to immediately swear in Mr. Rodriguez in order to put an end to the six-month vacancy in our Senate body which has led the people of the Virgin Islands to being underrepresented."

Mrs. Millin Young, a longtime Democrat who joined the Minority Caucus earlier this year following dissension during the time the Democratic Majority was creating committee assignments, went on to say that if the Legislature seeks to review Mr. Rodriguez's eligibility, it can immediately convene a Committee of the Whole for the sole objective of additional vetting. Or it can create a Select Committee on Ethics to ensure that the matters arising out of Ms. Sarauw's complaints are addressed.

"It is my position that the leadership of the 32nd Legislature cannot continue to drag on this process, and I am informing the president, today, that I do not intend to stay all day and into the wee hours of Wednesday morning, June 28th rehashing the issues we have heard over and over again," she said.

"It is time to move on and to do the People's business. Failure to swear in Mr. Rodriguez first and engaging in endless discussions on the various court filings would be a travesty and an injustice. It would show that in our 100th anniversary as a U.S. territory we cannot make a simple and just decision," Mrs. Millin Young concluded.

According to a release issued late Friday, the Senate will meet on Tuesday for a session to determine Mr. Rodriguez's fate, followed by a Wednesday session to tend to a slew of bills that have passed various committees and are ready for final votes before being forwarded to Government House.

[Read the original document](#)

