

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Minority Caucus Takes Exception With Senate President's Letter To Board Of Elections

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ST. THOMAS -- The vote by the 32nd Legislature on Wednesday to not seat Kevin Rodriquez, a result handed to Mr. Rodriquez, a Democrat, by his fellow party members in the Senate, was a crushing blow for Mr. Rodriquez, who had spent months in court fighting for the seat, which he won during the 2016 general election.

But just one day following his rejection by Senate Democrats, Myron Jackson, the 32nd body's president, wrote a letter to the St. Thomas-St. John Board of Elections requesting that the board [immediately seat the April 8 special election winner, Janelle Sarauw.](#)

“Prior to the legislature’s vote that Mr. Rodriguez was not a member of the 32nd Legislature, the St. Thomas-St. John Board of Elections took the position that it would not certify the prevailing candidate as the senator-elect for the St. Thomas-St. John district because Kevin Rodriguez was already certified as a senator-elect,” reads the letter. Mr. Jackson was referring to Ms. Sarauw, who won the April 8 special election. “As a consequence of the Legislature’s vote, there is no longer an impediment to the St. Thomas-St. John Board of Elections certifying the prevailing candidate as the winning candidate from the April 8 special election.”

The letter adds: “As such, the 32nd Legislature of the Virgin Islands requests that the prevailing candidate be certified as the winner of the April 8, 2017 special election, so that the legislature may swear the candidate in as senator.”

Members of the 32nd Legislature’s Minority Caucus took strong exception on Friday to Mr. Jackson’s letter, troubled that it came off as representing the entire body.

“It is our understanding based on the representation of the legislature’s legal counsel that all that is required of the legislature is that we inform the Election System that a vacancy now exists because of that vote. No other official action was taken,” said Minority Leader Positive Nelson.

He added, “It seems as if the president has learned nothing throughout this whole ordeal. He continues to represent his and the decisions of the Majority Caucus as decisions of the body. This is why the legislature acted on the matter only within the last few days when as early as January our legal counsel had issued opinions informing us that we were required to act in this matter and could not abdicate this responsibility.”

Minority Caucus members, who issued the release as a joint effort, said now that the legislature has finally acted in its required role, “It is imperative that we allow other bodies like the Election System to act independently as they are required by law.”

Other members of the caucus, including Senators Dwayne M. DeGraff, Alicia Hansen, Tregenza Roach and Janette Millin Young, said they were equally outraged, and contended that Mr. Jackson had misrepresented the body.