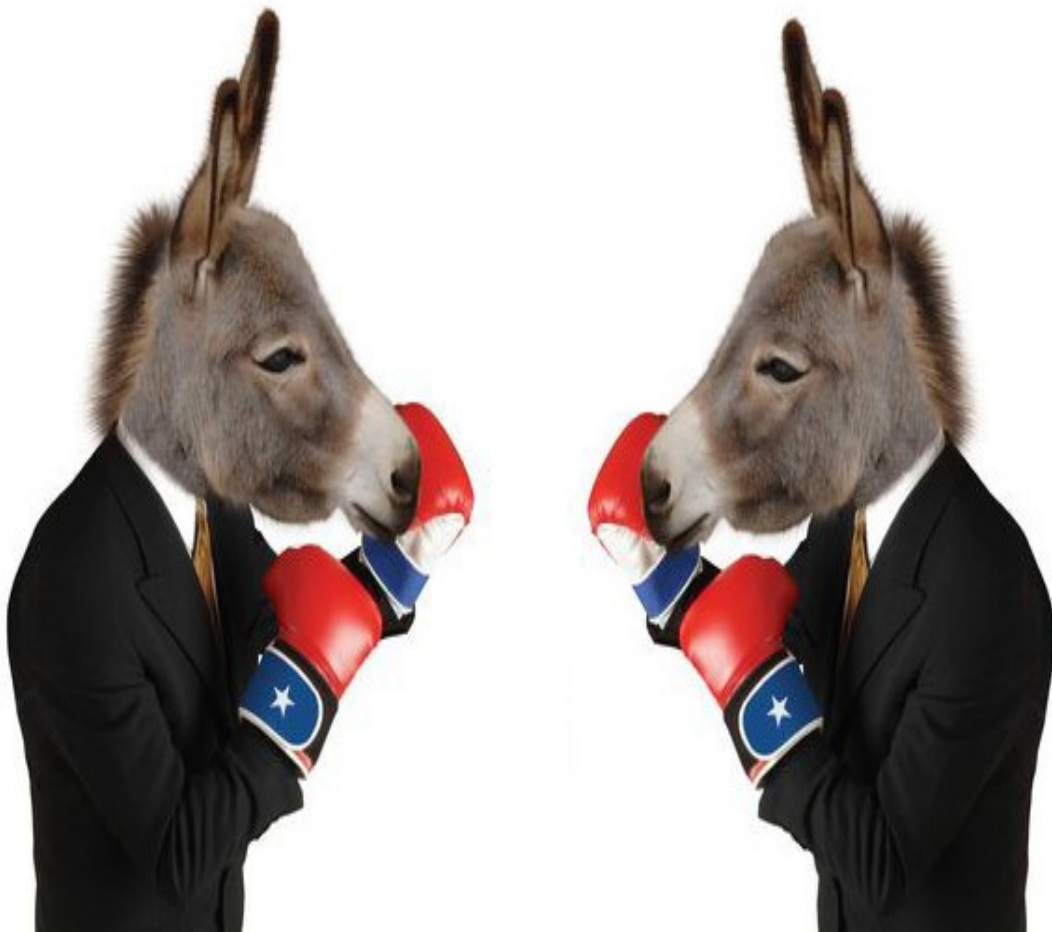


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Democratic Party Files Suit In District Court Seeking To Bar Board Of Elections From Seating Sarauw

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ST. THOMAS -- The Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands and three of its officers who are voters in the St. Thomas- St. John District, filed a complaint in the U.S. District Court asking for a declaratory judgement and injunctive relief that would bar the Board of Elections from certifying and the Legislature from seating the winner of the April 8th Special election, Janelle Sauraw, a release issued by Donna Christensen, former delegate to Congress and current state chair of the Democratic Party, has made known.

"In fact our position is that there was no vacancy until June 28th, (as I said in a previous release and in my testimony), which would make that election invalid," Ms. Christensen said. The move puts on display the infighting within the party on the Sarauw issue -- even

as Ms. Christensen in this release attempted to play down the contention -- following Senate Democrats Wednesday decision to reject Kevin Rodriguez from being seated as a member of the 32nd Legislature.

The Party has also taken the position that Section 6 of the Organic Act was violated in that the Legislature did not base their vote on Mr. Rodriguez's eligibility on the 6 criteria set out by the Organic Act, which determine qualifications to be a valid candidate for the Legislature, the release states.

"In addition, we are asserting that he was not given due process," Ms. Christensen said. "The senators were ably advised by their legal counsel beforehand and during the Committee of the Whole, but that advice was ignored. The process to be followed was also not shared with his attorney as he had requested and was entitled to," the former delegate to Congress added, referring to Mr. Rodriguez. "Therefore we are asking the court to issue a declaratory judgement based on all of the above."

Ms. Christensen said the action of filing a complaint in court against members of her own party, was not made without considerable thought. "We are Democrats and the Senate leadership and majority are Democrats. In fact at our meeting on June 3, 2017 we voted to recognize the majority as the official Democratic Caucus," Ms.. Christensen said.

She added: "While the case is occasioned by what we see as unfair and even illegal treatment of Senator-elect Kevin Rodriguez, we are even more concerned about the integrity of the first branch of government and about the fact that the process and the actions taken by the 32nd Legislature could set a dangerous precedent for the next elected person whose credentials may be questioned.

"There are times when even the most avid partisan must put the people and the good of the Territory above Party. We feel that this is one such time."