

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Supreme Court Chief Justice Rhys S. Hodge To Swear In Janelle Sarauw Friday

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ST. THOMAS -- The 32nd Legislature has cancelled a previously scheduled session on Friday, and will instead only swear-in Janelle Sarauw as the 15th senator of the body, according to a release the Legislature issued Thursday.

The swearing-in ceremony has been scheduled for 12 noon.

According to the release, the cancellation of the session, where senators were set to deliberate Ms. Sarauw with the intent of swearing her into office, is a direct result of the St. Thomas-St. John District Board of Elections' recent action to certify Ms. Sarauw's candidacy.

"This is a result of the actions taken by the St. Thomas-St. John District Board of Elections on Monday, July 10, 2017 to certify the April 8, 2017 Special Election, in which Senator Elect Janelle Sarauw was declared an official winner," reads the Legislature's release.

Administering the oath of office to Ms. Sarauw will end the overdrawn saga that has pitted Democrats against each other, with St. Thomas-St. John Democratic Party Chair Edgar Baker Phillips levying wild accusations against fellow Democrats in an effort to discredit their reason for voting against Mr. Rodriguez during the June 28 Senate session. Democrats who voted to reject Mr. Rodriguez said because he lied to a bankruptcy court in Tennessee in an attempt to keep his family from becoming homeless, he should not be seated.

On April 8, Ms. Sarauw won over her closest competitor, former Senator Justin Harrigan, Sr., who collected over 900 votes, while Ms. Sarauw carried her victory with over 1,200 votes. Once seated, Ms. Sarauw will be the youngest among her peers, and is registered as an Independent. Whether or not she will side with the Minority Caucus whose members are mostly Independents, or the Democrats who cleared the likely path — or whether Ms. Sarauw will remain independent in the true sense of the word — remains to be seen.