

The Virgin Islands Consortium

It's Over: Janelle Sarauw Is Sworn In As 15th Senator Of 32nd Legislature

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Janelle Sarauw

ST. THOMAS -- After what seemed as a never-ending battle between Janelle Sarauw and Kevin Rodriguez to fill the 15th seat of the 32nd Legislature, Ms. Sarauw on Friday took the oath of office here; she was sworn in by Supreme Court Chief Justice Rhys Hodge.

"I would like to thank God. We have come this far by faith. I also like to thank my family, friends and supporters. For me, standing in this well was a very difficult journey.

Everything about me was tested. This conflict has torn apart residents in the community, families, political parties and friends. However, it is now time to heal. We must achieve political maturity. We must move forward," said Ms. Sarauw upon taking the oath of office at the Earl B. Ottley Legislative Hall.

"Part of my duties as president is to ensure that the oath of office is administered. All duties relating to the certification of the special election have been completed. We are here today to seat Janelle Sarauw to serve as the 15th senator of the 32nd Legislature," said Senate President Myron Jackson.

Virgin Islanders tired of the protracted saga have expressed gladness that the issue -- which dominated local news for months -- has finally ended.

"Finally the saga should end. Time to focus on the real issues," said H'moude Manasra on The Consortium's [Facebook platform](#). Others wasted no time in holding the budding lawmaker accountable. "Please don't do like the others and forget the people... fight for your people and make sure our tax returns be in the mail soon," [said](#) Keken Baron.

On April 8, Ms. Sarauw won the special election 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. She is 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 rejected their own party member, Mr. Rodriguez, during a June 28 Senate Session — or whether Ms. Sarauw will remain independent in the true sense of the word — remains to be seen.