

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Is The USVI In A Better Place Today Than It Was Before Mapp Took Office? Yes, Mapp Suggests

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In what may wound up being one of the most critical questions during this election year, Governor Kenneth Mapp suggested that the territory is in a better place than it was when he took office in 2015, and that his administration -- following the devastating 2017 storms and the work he says his team has done in securing federal dollars -- has laid the foundation for a prosperous future for the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Mr. Mapp was responding to a question from a Consortium reporter, who asked the governor if he thought the potential windfall of billions of dollars for the USVI would help his reelection bid.

And the territory's leader, after spending well over three years in office and serving his last eight months before the election, appeared to cast blame on the former administration for some of the territory's current ills, restating the condition he met the government in when he took office.

"The voters are going to vote," the governor said. "That I'm not going to worry about, I'm going to fight very hard to make my case. Lieutenant Governor Potter and I have a great story to tell, because it's not about we haven't fixed everything in the Virgin Islands, really what it is, is how did we receive it in January of 2015, and where is it in 2018 and where it's going to go beyond. Have we set the stage for a bright future of the territory."

I have no more campaigns to run after this one; I'm at the end stage of that game. - Governor Mapp

Mr. Mapp said voters will make the decision on who should lead the USVI moving forward. "The people of the Virgin Islands have to decide who they think is really best to manage their affairs. I'm really going to work hard and continue to work with my cabinet to do the best I can for the Virgin Islands, in the time that the people of the Virgin Islands give me.

"And if they decide that my time is good at the end of this year, I'll be humbled and thankful and be honored that I had the opportunity to serve. And I will go off to where I want to go in terms of my retirement and back to my personal life. I have no more campaigns to run after this one; I'm at the end stage of that game.

"For me, it's to take this opportunity and demonstrate to the people of the Virgin Islands that they're solid Americans and they're part of the American family, and they have every access to the resources that every American across this nation has," he said.

The governor said the local government overtime had earned a reputation of being incompetent, but his administration, he believes, has set a different course. "Lieutenant Governor Potter and I are using our administration to demonstrate that there are Virgin Islanders who can get it right," he said, as administration officials at the press conference last week responded with applause. His administration, Mr. Mapp went on, "can make the case and demonstrate to the world that there is tremendous competency here, and if the federal government puts us on a level playing field of parity, with every other American city and state, just how much we can advance the opportunities for the people of the Virgin Islands, and the opportunities for the Virgin Islands."

Mr. Mapp said he recently read in an editorial that he shouldn't take credit for the federal dollars that are pouring into the territory -- monies, Mr. Mapp said, that are a result of his administration's work to assure that the USVI receives its rightful share. He said the writer of the editorial did not want him to take credit, "But certainly they want me to take the blame. So I don't have to answer to the media, what I have to answer to is my employers, and that's the good people of the Virgin Islands," Mr. Mapp concluded.