

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Forde Says He Is Not Aware Of Any Investigation Into His Wife

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ST. THOMAS -- Senator Jean Forde issued a heated press release this afternoon in response to a V.I. Consortium [article published this morning](#), stating that he was not aware of any investigation at the Department of Justice into his wife, Lisa Forde, and suggested that the article was in response to his criticism of Dept. of Education Commissioner Sharon McCollum at a hearing a few weeks ago.

"It is very revealing that these allegations, and the article spreading these rumors, come just three weeks after harsh words were exchanged between the Commissioner of Education and myself during a Committee on Education, Youth and Recreation hearing last month," Mr. Forde said in the release. The Consortium, of course, is in no such plot

with Ms. McCollum.

He referred to the article as "yellow journalism" and "a piece of trash," and said "not a single fact could be attributed to a source."

Attorney General Claude Walker on Wednesday told The Consortium that the department's policy prohibits him from commenting on ongoing investigations, therefore, details could not be provided. Today, D.O.J. issued the following statement on the matter: "Attorney General Walker can confirm that the Department of Justice is investigating a Department of Education employee in the St. Thomas- St. John District regarding missing funds. We cannot provide further information at this time, as the investigation is ongoing."

A trusted, well-placed D.O.J. source employed at the institution, who requested anonymity because of strict confidentiality policies set in place by Mr. Walker, told The Consortium that Ms. Forde was being investigated, and suggested that the matter was serious enough for D.O.J. to dedicate resources to it. "With the amount of things happening in the Virgin Islands, if this case wasn't serious, D.O.J. would not be investigating it," this person said.

The matter is said to involve a safe kept at the school where money is stored, and the unauthorized removal of funds from the safe by someone with access to it.

Mr. Forde, however, throughout the release falsely referred to the article as an attack against him, and at one point suggested that political opponents were targeting his family to retaliate against him -- again, falsely.

"As an elected official, I accept that my words and actions are matters of public record, scrutiny and debate, and I am prepared to deal with the fact that political attacks will be made against me. These are facts of life in the political arena," he said. "When, however, people choose to target my family members in retaliation for my actions as a senator, this crosses a bright red line."

The article states that Mr. Forde's wife is under investigation for missing funds at the school where she serves as principal; it did not say that she was guilty of any crime. It also said that D.O.J. is expected to comment on the matter once the investigation is complete.

The senator continued to rigorously defend his wife. "My wife has served the children of this territory as a teacher and educational administrator for over thirty years, and she has always adhered to the highest standards of integrity and professional conduct," he said. "She has not been charged with or accused of any crime, and I am not aware of her being under investigation by any agency of law enforcement.

"I can say with confidence that neither she nor any of my immediate family members have ever been engaged in or even associated with any wrongdoing or shady dealings. As such, it is extremely disturbing to see her name being dragged through the mud simply because she is married to someone who has dared to stand up for what is right. Nonetheless, I am confident that my wife's and my family's name will be vindicated, and I will continue to serve the people of this community with pride and integrity," the senator concluded.

