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Consortium Parts Ways With Journalist After Revelation of His Involvement in Latest Bid Process for Dept. of Health Contact Tracing RFP

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The Virgin Islands Consortium on Wednesday parted ways with its St. Thomas journalist Robert Moore, after Mr. Moore revealed to the publication on Wednesday that his name was represented in a proposal sent to the Dept. of Health by a U.S.-based company for D.O.H.'s new contact tracing request for proposal as "liaison to the Dept. of Health".

Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion on Wednesday revealed that the department rejected Avera's proposal, [after previously accepting it](#), and initiated a new request for proposal process.

Mr. Moore told Consortium Founder and Publisher Ernice Gilbert about his involvement in the latest bid process Wednesday afternoon while a Committee of the Whole hearing on gov't

contracts — sparked by the controversial Avera deal, which the Consortium has reported heavily on — was ongoing at the Legislature.

"To me, this represents a clear conflict of interest to have one of our writers involved in a matter that has become so highly charged, and one we've covered so thoroughly," Mr. Gilbert said. "This simply would give the appearance, even if it's not the case, that the publication was trying to support one of its journalists in matters unrelated to journalism. For this reason, I have spoken to Robert — one of our best journalists — and informed him of my decision."

Mr. Gilbert praised Mr. Moore as an award-winning journalist who will be missed at the Consortium. However, he added that journalistic integrity remains a bedrock of the platform's core principles, and therefore simply could not continue the relationship in its current form knowing of Mr. Moore's involvement in the new process.

The company Mr. Moore is representing is one of 6 that sent in proposals to be considered for the Dept. of Health's latest RFP.

"With his strong journalistic background, I am certain Mr. Moore will do well elsewhere, and, as I've said, he will be missed here," the VIC founder concluded.

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