

The Virgin Islands Consortium

'It Wasn't An Easy Decision,' Rivera-O'Reilly Admits As She Says Goodbye To Senate

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Senator Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly.

ST. CROIX -- No one knew for sure if Senator Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly would seek reelection. And if she had said she would not seek reelection, those who've followed the senator would know not to take her word for it, considering her [double-minded history](#) on the matter.

This time, however, Mrs. Rivera-O'Reilly will not vie for a seat in the 33rd Legislature -- not according to her words -- but the [official filing documents](#) provided by the Elections

System of the Virgin Islands, which does not include the senator's name.

The Consortium reached out to Mrs. Rivera-O'Reilly for comment, and along with confirming that she will not seek reelection, she said the decision not to run was difficult.

"It wasn't an easy decision. We agonized over this until the very last day," the senator said. "There are a number of initiatives that we wanted to bring to fruition. We still have six months left and plan to get as much done as possible. This has been a very humbling experience. Our office worked very hard to deliver on our promise to be good stewards of the people's trust. Serving in the majority during this final term added a very valuable perspective to my overall experience in public office."

Just before the primary elections filing deadline in April 2016, Mrs. Rivera-O'Reilly told this publication that, "Sometimes the time comes when you have to pass on the mantle and bring new energy and bring new ideas to the Legislature, and only when one of us steps down or gets moved can that happen." But she wound up running -- and winning.

This time, she pulled the trigger. "The most difficult part of the job is coming to terms with the ugly side of politics and people. Change is harder than any of us can ever imagine. We leave knowing that we didn't conform to business as usual," Mrs. Rivera-O'Reilly said. "We pushed hard against the status quo. We cared deeply about every issue and every person that reached out to us. I wish all candidates much success in their bid for public office. May the territory be blessed with honest hard working and committed public servants."

Following the end of her tenure once the 33rd Legislature is sworn in, Mrs. Rivera-O'Reilly said she would spend time with family. "I haven't seen my mother in 6 weeks," she said of her aging parent. "I need to reconnect with my family."

With Mrs. Rivera-O'Reilly out of the Senate, four seats are now open to this year's hopefuls in the St. Croix District (along with Mrs. Rivera-O'Reilly, Positive Nelson, Sammuell Sanes and Alicia Hansen won't seek reelection as senators). In the St. Thomas-St. John District, the seats of Tregenza Roach and Janette Millin Young are up for grabs.