

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Petrus And Sanes Call Decision To Hold School On Memorial Day 'Misguided, Just Plain Wrong'

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With the election season coming to bloom and the Democratic primary drawing closer, the Petrus-Sanes gubernatorial ticket is taking direct aim at Governor Kenneth Mapp for what the team said was the administration's decision to "force our teachers and students to attend school this past Monday, on a day when we, as a territory and a community, should have been taking the time to honor the true heroes of our American Armed Forces, those who paid the ultimate sacrifice to ensure our freedoms and our way of life."

The Department of Education announced on Friday that Memorial Day would be observed as a "make-up day for students and school-based staff across the territory." The idea being that with students being out of school for months following Hurricanes

Irma and Maria in September 2017, certain holidays would need to be sacrificed so that students could catch up on learning.

But for Mr. Petrus and Mr. Sanes, Memorial Day should have been out of the question. "There were many other days that were not federal holidays that the Department of Education could have used to make up public school days. What is the total cost to the Virgin Islands Government for this make-up day on this most solemn of holidays? In addition to the financial strain, this make-up day communicates a lack of respect for the sacrifice made by those represented on Memorial Day," Mr. Petrus said in an opinion piece submitted to news publications.

Mr. Petrus said he agreed that students would need to spend additional days in school to makeup for the devastation wrought by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, but stressed that the significance of Memorial Day should have kept it off the list. "As Veterans, both Senator Sanes and I are left to wonder, what message do we send to our young Virgin Islanders when we begin to erode national and cultural observances? This is yet another clear example of Governor Mapp's unwillingness to make the right decisions for the betterment of our community," Mr. Petrus said.

Mr. Sanes added, "Memorial Day is a day we say thank you for bravery, honor, and selflessness. It's a day we take a moment to reflect on our grandparents, aunts, brothers, and unfortunately even sometimes our children, who gave of themselves so that we can enjoy every day American freedoms."

The territory commemorated Memorial Day with activities territory-wide. On St. Croix, Mr. Mapp [laid a wreath](#) on the grave of military veteran Will Thurland at the Christiansted Cemetery.