

The Virgin Islands Consortium

In Win For Myron Jackson, Senate Overrides Mapp's Veto Of Curator Bill

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ST. THOMAS -- The 32nd Legislature offered a startling rebuke to Governor Kenneth Mapp on Thursday, overriding three measures that the governor had recently vetoed.

The vetoes that senators overrode were for a bill seeking [to turn Catherineberg into a museum](#) and place it under the control of the government, another measure that [strips the governor of his veto-like power](#) over decisions already made at the Economic Development Commission, and the third, Bill No. 32-0024, which seeks to provide for a curator and a committee to be responsible for the fine and decorative arts of Government Houses throughout the Virgin Islands.

Senator President Myron Jackson, the sponsor of the measure, said the legislation aims to create accountability for the acquisition, removal, care and preservation, and disposal of items in the collection.

But Mr. Mapp vetoed the measure in May, stating in his transmittal letter to Mr. Jackson that the bill would create "confusion and delays." The governor also criticized the bill's inclusion of a commission.

"Why does a curator need to be supervised and managed by eight persons? The bill is duplicative and provides no funding for the new positions and the committee it creates," Mr. Mapp said.

Along with the veto, the governor hired Julio Encarnacion III as chief conservator, and said he will work directly with the Department of Planning and Natural Resources commissioner, currently Dawn Henry, who is the statutory historic preservation officer.

Mr. Jackson responded swiftly with a rebuke following the governor's veto message. "The governor's actions just amplify the need for implementing a protocol for the antiquities housed under the roofs of government houses," Mr. Jackson said. "My bill is a policy many state governments have implemented. After visiting the White House curator during the Obama administration, it was clear that we were antiquated with how we care for and manage our resources. This is the third natural disaster where the care and management of art and treasures have been compromised. Now is the opportune time to implement the right policies. An override will be introduced."

Mr. Jackson said he has been working for years to pass legislation to protect antiques and artwork. He said the language in Bill No. 32-0024 was partially developed from his consultation with a curator from the White House in Washington, D.C.