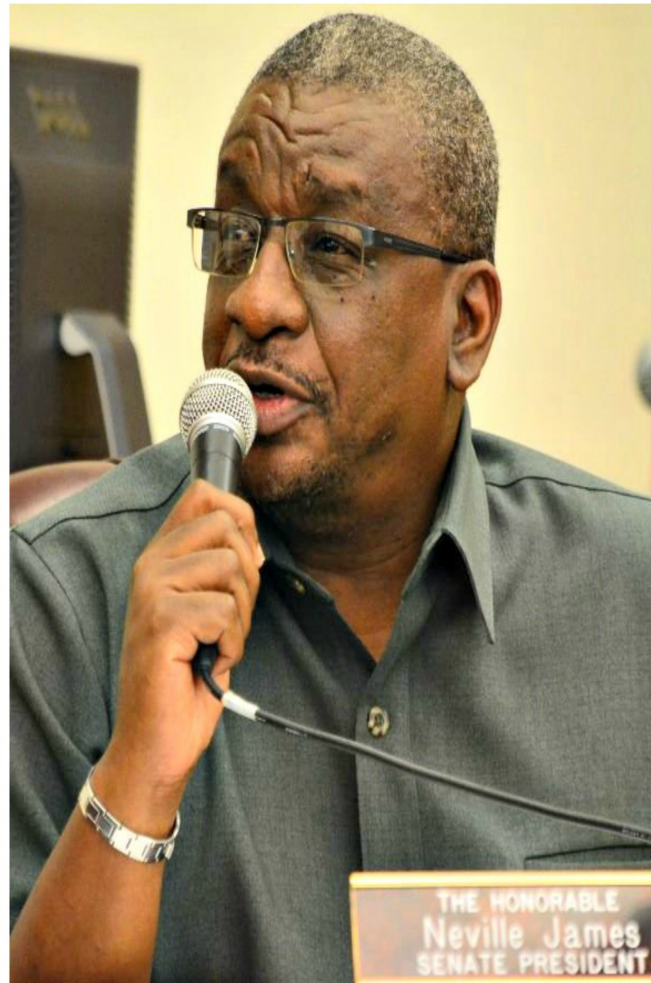


The Virgin Islands Consortium

After Unified Front On Thursday, A Shouting Match At The Legislature

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ST. THOMAS -- Following a unified front on Thursday when lawmakers who make up the 32nd Legislature overrode multiple of Governor Kenneth Mapp's vetoes, the senators took a different path on Friday, sniping at each other in a back-and-forth session that ultimately yielded action on a number of legislation.

Should the VI Government fund the Democratic Party's primary election? This argument consumed some time during Friday's session, with Positive Nelson, who is hoping to seek the territory's highest office as an Independent candidate, speaking out against an amendment to Bill No. 32-0179 (about a dozen amendments were tagged on to the bill), that appropriates \$125,000 in the Fiscal Year ending September 2018 from the general

fund, to facilitate the Democratic primary, set for August 4.

"The Democratic Party is established enough to fund their convention. The Board of Elections should do their job with integrity," said Mr. Nelson, whose candidacy [is now mired in court](#) due to Elections Supervisor Caroline Fawkes [rendering Mr. Nelson's nomination defective](#). The amendment passed nonetheless.

With a flurry of amendments being tagged on to Bill No. [32-0179](#), whose original intent was to place management of the apprenticeship programs to the Department of Labor, a majority of the debate took place on the bill. During a debate of an amendment related to the practicing of tele-medicine in the territory, Senators Alicia Hansen and Neville James went at each other.

First, the two veteran senators ignored Senate President Myron Jackson's attempts to bring order, with Mrs. Hansen contending that she was not in support of the Rivera-O'Reilly-sponsored amendment and therefore a roll call should be called so that her decision could be placed on record. Though Mr. Jackson assured the senator that her decision would be registered as being against the amendment, Mrs. Hansen persisted in stating her position even as Mr. Jackson sought to bring order.

When her turn to speak came, Mrs. Hansen fired: "I have a right here not to rubber stamp anything. And not one of you -- not one of you -- going to stop me from raising questions or standing up here. People didn't send me in this legislature to shut my mouth and not keep them informed, so I'm making that very clear because it looks like [you all] haven't gotten that straight yet.

"All these terms they gave me because I ask questions and I inform them. So you all could stand there thinking that the people don't have a right to know," Mrs. Hansen said, her voice raised.

In response, Mr. James spoke of Mrs. Hansen's length of service in the Legislature, stating, "This is not about 11 terms in the Legislature, we recognize her political greatness; we have no problem doing that. And there is no need for her to rubber stamp or for any senator to rubber stamp anything. You have the ability to object or vote No. We're not forcing anybody to do anything; we are asking you to legislate."

Mrs. Hansen took Mr. James's remark about greatness as an insult.

"Political greatness, Mr. president, is an insult to the people that voted for me for over 20 years. That's an insult!" she yelled. "The people have a right to vote for who they want. I'm tired of this same Senator James continuing to insult me each time with his degrading statements. He needs to stop."

Mr. James was firing back comments at Mrs. Hansen even as Mr. Jackson attempted to bring order -- to no avail -- so he called a 1-minute recess.

"You ain't nothing to me!" Mr. James hurled at Mrs. Hansen repeatedly as the recess took effect.

In other action, senators sent a bill sponsored by Senator Tregenza Roach that was special-ordered the floor to the Community on Government Affairs, Veterans, Energy and

Environmental Protection. The bill seeks to remove full authority of emergency declarations from the governor. It says the governor can declare a state of emergency following a storm, and only once thereafter at the governor's discretion for a total of 60 days. Any other emergency declaration related to the disaster should go through the legislature. Senators would then have five days to act on the governor's request, however if they are unable to do so, the state of emergency renews.

Most of Friday's bills were special-ordered to the floor, including the following:

- Bill No. 0226- A Resolution encouraging the people of Virgin Islands to observe July 22, 2018 as a remembrance of the devastation and human suffering caused by hurricanes Irma and Maria and as supplication for protection during the 2018 hurricane season.
- Bill No. 32-0227-A Act amending Title 27 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 4A, subsection 202, subsection (b) changing the amount of years, from two to four years, that five of the seven board members of the Virgin Islands Board of Licensed Counselors and Examiners are to be appointed.
- Bill No. 32-0228- An Act amending Title 19, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 16, section 245a relating to the Government Hospitals and Health Facilities Corporation's competitive bidding process to require advertisement for bids to be published through electronic media or in the newspapers of general circulation, and to make technical amendments.
- Bill No. 32-0229- An Act amending Title 23, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 10 Subchapter 1, section 1004 requiring the Government of the Virgin Islands to enter into contracts before June 1st of each year in preparedness for hurricane season or any emergency or major disaster.

Other approved bills were:

- Bill No. 32-0177-An Act amending Title 27, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter I, Subchapter IV, Section 97(a) relating to renewal of nursing licenses.
- Bill No. 32-0197- An Act amending Title 19 Virgin Islands Code by adding a new chapter 68 entitled "Animal Shelters providing a minimum standard of care for sheltered animals.

The approved measures will be forwarded to the governor approval or veto.