

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Unified Board Of Elections Forms District Committees In Attempt To Manage Upcoming Elections

VIC News / **Published On June 28, 2018 12:09 PM /**

Staff **June 28, 2018**



The newly formed unified Board of Elections, whose members include all elected board representatives from the St. Thomas-St. John and St. Croix districts, recently voted to form two committees -- one in each district -- that will be responsible for overseeing the upcoming Democratic primary election on August 4, as well as the general election on November 6.

The board's rationale behind the separation is to have better organization to manage the oftentimes overwhelming election day responsibilities. However, Republican members of the board, along with Senator Janelle Sarauw, dissented the action.

"The law established a unified elections board! One. Uno. The intent of the law is clear. The courts ruling was clear. Why is the Board finding loopholes and splitting into district committees? That defeats the intent of the bill. We propose election reform and it is signed into law and the BOE still does as they please or they create other avenues to avoid following the mandates set forth. This concerns me," Ms. Sarauw [wrote in a recent Facebook post](#).

Board member Robert Schanfarbet, a Republican representing the St. Thomas-St. John District, said, "Upon examination, I want to clarify that I am opposed to the creation of district committees under the Board of Elections in each district to conduct, oversee, administer, or otherwise regulate, in any way, shape or form, elections within a district," Mr. Schanfarbet said on June 22.

"I did not fully what was being proposed at the time of the meeting earlier today, as it was not on the agenda.

"I believe this puts the Board of Elections into potential conflict with the intent of the legislation establishing the present unified, territory-wide board as it and it alone is to conduct, oversee, administer, or otherwise regulate, in any way, shape or form, elections across the territory, irrespective of district. Should there be the need for district-specific training, it is my opinion and belief that the Supervisor of Elections and/or her designee is entitled to do this at a staff level.

"Accordingly, I am opposed to what was passed and ask for its immediate reconsideration at the next meeting of the board.

"I also request that the Supervisor of Elections and/or her designee identify all actions (votes, motions, resolutions, policies, procedures, rules, regulations and the like) adopted, promulgated, passed or otherwise enacted by the now-dissolved district and joint boards of election between August 1, 2017, and the Supreme Court's ruling so that this Board of Elections may affirmatively address each and every one of those actions, including the budget and all human resources/personnel matters, in accordance with court orders and the binding legal opinion of the attorney general."

In other action, the board voted Arturo Watlington as chairman, Raymond Williams as vice chair, and Alecia Wells as secretary. All these actions were taken during a June 22 meeting, which occurred via video conference.