

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Former JFL CEO Accuses Board Member, Senator, Of Seeking Job Favors For Friends

Health / **Published On September 20, 2018 11:06 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **September 20, 2018**



ST. CROIX -- Fired Juan F. Luis Hospital CEO Wanda Reuben in an explosive interview with The Consortium on Wednesday, accused JFL Board member Vera Falu of seeking a job favor for a friend of hers who was fired before Mrs. Reuben's tenure. When Mrs. Reuben refused to hire the individual, Ms. Falu, Mrs. Reuben said, turned on her.

Mrs. Reuben also took aim at Senator Kurt Violet, who she said chided the hospital on one hand and on another sought a favor -- that Mrs. Reuben find a position in the hospital for former JFL acting CEO Richard Evangelista.

"When Mr. Schuster [was removed](#) and Ms. Vera Falu took over... I was asked to bring a friend of the chairman of the board, of Ms. Vera Falu," Mrs. Reuben said. She said the claim was that the friend of Ms. Falu was wrongfully discharged, and so she decided to look into the matter.

"You can come to me and tell me somebody was wrongfully discharged, I will look into that," she said. "I did the investigation, unfortunately this person cannot come back. So I went back and I said the person cannot be hired."

"After refusing to rehire this individual, Ms. Falu didn't take it very well," Mrs. Reuben said. "She asked again if the person can come back, then she would pass messages at the board and say it was their fault that this person is not back, and she kept saying this. Then she couldn't get it from the CEO so she turned to the HR interim director and continued -- and I say this and I tell the people of St. Croix, I have the text. Even a date was set where she wanted her friend to be hired, and it didn't happen, so I got that one already on me."

Mrs. Reuben said following her decision not to rehire the fired employee, she suddenly became an incompetent CEO to Ms. Falu.

She also said Ms. Falu was a bully and that the board chair spoke to individuals in humiliating and demeaning ways, to the point where employees loathed attending meetings where Ms. Falu was present.

"It breaks my heart because it goes against everything that I work for," Mrs. Reuben said.

On Mr. Violet, a second-term lawmaker who chairs the Committee on Finance, Mrs. Reuben said there was a display of hypocrisy where the senator said one thing on the Senate floor, then asked for a favor that stood in contrast to the very thing he was saying.

"Mr. Violet questioned my qualifications. It's always been questioned, and I wonder why; I don't know if it's because I am a woman and they can't believe that a woman can run a hospital and can be a CEO. I don't know if it's because I'm Hispanic -- I don't know if it's just because they don't like me and they rather have the former CEO, because they happen to be friends," Mrs. Reuben said, speaking of Mr. Violet and Mr. Evangelista.

"But when the senator sits in a chair and tell the people of the Virgin Islands, and accuse you like I was accused, that I've hired and I'm firing people because the board is telling me... And then after the meeting they come to you and say, 'can't you find a job for so and so? Why don't you accommodate Mr. Evangelist? Why don't you put him in HR? You can accept him as a legal counsel,'" Mrs. Reuben said she was told by Mr. Violet.

"So you sit there and you accuse me, and then you come to me and ask me to hire this person. Why? My question is why?" said Mrs. Reuben.

Institutions normally go through a process that aims to make the best selection when hiring individuals, part of which includes background checks and interviews with a number of persons. Mrs. Reuben's accusation that Mr. Violet asked her to hire Mr. Evangelista appears to suggest that the senator was requesting that the CEO break protocol. It can also be interpreted as if he was using his influence as a lawmaker in an attempt to get someone who he knows a high-paying job at a government institution.

Calls placed to Mr. Violet for comment were not returned at time of writing. The Consortium is also awaiting a response from Ms. Falu, and will update this story if comment is provided.

Feature Image: Former JFL CEO Wanda Reuben. (Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC)

© Viconsortium 2026