

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Letter to the Editor | Senator Myron Jackson, Allow The Reapportionment Initiative To Become Law

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Staff **October 23, 2018**



Dear Editor,

This is an open letter Senate President Myron Jackson:

"If the people will lead, the leaders will follow," says the motto of the Museum of American Heroes.

Thanks for chairing the hearing this past Wednesday in St. Croix regarding the first ever ballot-qualified voters' initiative. It showed fidelity to the American ideal of "We the People." Fellow West Indian Alexander Hamilton, vital in securing those ideals, revealed

that his time in St. Croix was the most useful part of his education and would've been pleased with the initiative's aim to establish checks and balances within the legislative branch. Indeed, veteran senator Nellie O'Riley was so taken aback by the quality and class of the dialogue between testifiers and senators she repeatedly exclaimed "I am so proud!"

Yet, as profound as was that hearing, the efforts of your august body seem at this point too little, too late. For a score, St. Croix's most popular talk show host made this issue a centerpiece and with many initiators calling-in and urging the Senate to stop, look and listen. Still, was it not for St. Croix Government Retirees, Inc., there would be no hearings like the one on Wednesday. This is so even though this struggle spans 50 years. Alex Joseph's "Centennial Countdown" special "The reapportionment of the V. I. Legislature" (Daily News July 21, 2016) wrote of the uproar caused by divestiture of St. John as a distinct district, and of the call for reinstatement of at-large senators, both of which had been set in place by Congress until 1966. The then-U.S. Attorney Almeric Christian viewed the 1966 reshuffle as a disgrace. He slammed the lies that those changes were mandated by Congress. The truth is that Congress merely granted our legislature the option to reorganize itself. Several lawsuits followed, and by then Almeric Christian had become Chief Judge Christian. In the end, he ruled that the solution to the senate changes of 1966 must come from the political arena.

We the People have now brought this politics to fore with that intuitive. It is therefore just, decent, and politically wise for the current Senate to allow the initiative to become law. Eight thousand citizens signed the petition circulated without resources such as paid staff, transportation budget, etc. Do the People justice by allowing the initiative to become law.

Respectfully,

Michael A. Joseph, Esq., (340-643-7380)

Submitted on Monday by: Michael A. Joseph, Esq.