

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Rattan Poll Predicts Runoff

VIC News / **Published On November 03, 2018 11:05 AM /**

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Another poll, known as the Rattan Election Poll, has predicted a runoff, with Governor Kenneth Mapp and Albert Bryan going neck-and-neck on November 6.

The Rattan Election Poll dates back to 1998, according to founder Attorney Raymond James. He told The Consortium on Friday that the poll utilizes an old fashion methodology whereby respondents are given a ballot that mimics the one used on election day. "We hand people what you call the draft ballot directly from the Board of Elections," Mr. James said. "We convert that into our own template with various questions that we ask and it includes the numbers of the candidates. Poll takers go out into the community, sometimes in government offices, restaurants, barbershops for example, and hand out the ballots and ask the person to please give it back to the test

taker after they've selected who they want to vote for."

Questioned about the reliability of his poll in light of its wrong prediction for the primary election (the poll predicted Albert Bryan coming in last place. However, Mr. Bryan won the race by a strong margin), Mr. James explained that though the poll wrongly predicted the winner, it rightly predicted that the race would be close in each district.

"People don't understand what happened," Mr. James said. "I said to them if you read my comments, I said the race was close and that anyone of them could win."

In the latest poll, which has a margin of error of plus or minus 5 to 7 percent, Mr. Bryan has 40 percent of the votes in the St. Thomas-St. John District, followed by the governor with 25 percent, Adlah Donastorg with 14 percent, Moletto Smith and Warren Mosler tied at 6 percent a piece, Janette Millin Young at 4 percent, and Soraya Diase-Coffelt at 3 percent. The poll has 7 percent of voters as undecided.

In the St. Croix District, Mr. Mapp has 36 percent of the votes, followed by Mr. Bryan with 26 percent. In third place is Mr. Donastorg with 13 percent of the votes, followed by Mr. Mosler with 11 percent, and Mr. Smith, Ms. Millin Young, and Ms. Coffelt each at 1 percent. Eleven percent of voters in the St. Croix District are undecided, the poll found. (We would have embedded the results document provided to us by Mr. James, but it includes an error in the St. Croix numbers that shows Mr. Mapp at 26 percent, when it should be 36 percent, according to Mr. James.)

Territory-wide, according to the poll, Mr. Bryan is at 33 percent, the governor at 30 percent, and Mr. Donastorg at 13 percent. The race between the two top candidates is considered a statistical dead heat, as the poll's margin of error is plus or minus 5 to 7 percent, Mr. James said.

The remaining candidates for the territory-wide tally are as follows: Mr. Mosler with 8 percent, Mr. Smith with 3 percent, Ms. Millin Young with 2 percent, and Ms. Coffelt with 2 percent.

A poll released before Mr. James's, [the John Boyd poll](#), showed the governor going into the general election leading with 34 percent, while Mr. Donastorg and Mr. Bryan were heading into November 6 tied at 21 percent a piece.

On the Senate side in St. Croix, the new poll shows Allison DeGazon leading with 24 percent, followed by Alicia Barnes with 20 percent, Kurt Violet and Novelle Francis tied at 15 percent, Javan James and Kenneth Gittens tied at 14 percent, and Oakland Benta and Patricia James at 13 percent each. Unlike the Boyd Poll, which showed Michael Springer competing with Novelle Francis for fourth place, the Rattan Poll has Mr. Springer collecting only 5 percent of the votes.

In the St. Thomas-St. John District, the poll has Athniel Thomas leading with 36 percent, followed by Myron Jackson with 28 percent, Donna Frett-Gregory with 26 percent, Marvin Blyden with 25 percent, Carla Joseph with 23 percent, Jean Forde with 23 percent, and Dwayne DeGraff, Stedman Hodge, Jr. and Janelle Sarauw tied at 21 percent each.

The At-Large race sees Steven Payne leading with 35 percent in the St. Thomas-St. John District, followed by Sherry Ann Francis with 27 percent, and Angel L. Bolques with

25 percent. On St. Croix, Mr. Payne holds 35 percent of the votes, followed by Mrs. Francis with 27 percent, and Mr. Bolques with 25 percent, according to the Rattan Poll.

The number one issue on the minds of voters was the Government Employees' Retirement System, according to the poll. Second top issue was the cost of electricity in the territory, followed by the economy in third place (a sign that people believe the economy is improving), and crime as the fourth top issue.

Also on the ballot was whether Virgin Islanders would support medicinal marijuana in the territory, which returned a favorable result of 58 percent. On the legalization of recreational marijuana, 51 percent of Virgin Islanders supported the idea, according to the poll, which represents the first time that the question has ever won a majority percentage of respondents on the Rattan Poll, Mr. James told The Consortium.

On the reapportionment petition, 48 percent said yes, 24 percent said no, and the remaining respondents were undecided.