

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Senate Reshuffles Again, This Time Naming New Committee Heads

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Though the 33rd Legislature was reorganized during a May 15 session which saw the removal of Senators Kenneth Gittens and Donna Frett-Gregory from the Senate president and vice president positions, respectively, along with a number of changes on the committee level, the Senate again on Wednesday reshuffled the structure of the Majority Caucus, with Senate President Novelle Francis stating that the latest reorganizing was needed as some committee assignments given during the May 15 changes were rejected by some senators.

"Yesterday again we went into session for the purpose of shoring up the committees because in the reorganization on the 15th [of May] there were some individuals named to

committees that have decided to either not accept those committees or in fact asked for some other committee," Mr. Francis said during a press conference the Majority held at the Earl B. Ottley Legislative Hall today. "So in working with our colleagues we were able to shore up those committees yesterday."



From left to right: Senators Steven D. Payne, Sr., Janelle K. Sarauw, Marvin Blyden, Alicia Barnes, Novelle Francis, Myron Jackson and Allison DeGazon (Credit: VI Legislature)

Mr. Francis again thanked his colleagues for choosing him to lead the 33rd body, and said residents would see a number of investigative hearings in the coming weeks and months, including closer looks at WAPA, the Waste Management Authority, health facilities, the Government Employees' Retirement System, disaster recovery and more.

"We have to take hold of these semiautonomous agencies as well as the central government because time in and time out we continue to just budget to these individuals and then they just come back, and we're seeing that they owe vendors, they're not spending the money; a lot of times they owe employees in terms of salary payment, and we just not being able to meet our demands here in the government," Mr. Francis said.

Below, the latest committee assignments:

Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr. is elected President.

Senator Myron D. Jackson is elected Vice-President.

Senator Alicia V. Barnes is elected Secretary.

Senator Marvin A. Blyden is elected Majority Leader.

Senator Myron D. Jackson is elected Secretary for Intergovernmental and Territorial Affairs.

Senator Allison L. DeGazon is elected Liaison to the United States Congress.

Senator Alicia V. Barnes is elected Liaison to the United States Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

Senator Janelle K. Sarauw is elected Liaison to the White House.

The 33rd Legislature's standing committee chairs are as follows:

Committee on Rules and Judiciary

Chair: Senator Janelle K. Sarauw

Vice-Chair: Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr.

Committee on Finance

Chair: Senator Kurt A. Vialet

Vice Chair: Senator Marvin A. Blyden

Committee on Government Operations, Consumer Affairs, Energy, Environment, and Planning

Chair: Senator Alicia V. Barnes

Vice-Chair: Senator Myron D. Jackson

Committee on Education and Workforce Development

Chair: Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory

Vice-Chair: Senator Kurt A. Vialet

Committee on Health, Hospitals and Human Services

Chair: Senator Oakland Benta

Vice Chair: Senator Janelle K. Sarauw

Committee on Youth, Sports, Parks and Recreation

Chair: Senator Javan E. James, Sr.

Vice-Chair: Senator Steven D. Payne, Sr.

Committee on Economic Development, Regulations and Agriculture

Chair: Senator Allison L. DeGazon

Vice Chair: Senator Athneil “Bobby” Thomas

Committee on Homeland Security, Justice, Public Safety, and Veterans’ Affairs

Chair: Senator Steven D. Payne, Sr.

Vice-Chair: Senator Oakland Benta

Committee on Housing, Transportation, Infrastructure and Telecommunications

Chair: Senator Marvin A. Blyden

Vice-Chair: Senator Alicia V. Barnes

Committee on Culture, Historic Preservation, and Aging

Chair: Senator Myron D. Jackson

Vice-Chair: Senator Javan E. James, Sr.

Committee of the Whole

Consists of ALL Members of the 33rd Legislature