

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Plaskett, Who Has Consistently Criticized The U.S. Government For Its Treatment Of U.S. Territories, Issues Statement In Light Of New Supreme Court Case

VIC News / **Published On October 18, 2019 10:40 AM /**

Staff **October 18, 2019**



The U.S. Supreme Court has taken on a case whose outcome could reshape the governance structures of U.S. territories, as it takes into consideration a consequential question: Should the U.S. territories be allowed to govern themselves?

The Revised Organic Act of 1954 gave U.S. Virgin Islands residents the right to choose their own government. A similar law was passed for Puerto Rico in 1947 by the U.S. Congress giving the people of the commonwealth the right to elect their own governor, among other leaders.

But with the U.S. Supreme Court set to decide whether the U.S. territories should select their own chief executives, according to [the Scotus blog](#), “we can be sure that lawyers, law professors and the bond markets, as well as residents of Puerto Rico, will all be waiting anxiously for the result.”

Residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands and other U.S. territories are paying attention as well, as the outcome will impact all U.S. territories.

Also watching the case closely is Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, a consistent advocate for equal rights for all Americans -- including those living in U.S. territories. The congresswoman has issued a statement reaffirming her known stance and has joined a resolution that rejects the use of Insular Cases in present and future arguments.

Below, Ms. Plaskett's full statement, issued Wednesday.

“Since the early 1900s, the *Insular Cases* have plagued the United States territories, by establishing for America full sovereignty without full constitutional rights and protections for the territories. Since coming to Congress, I have continuously pushed for territorial equity. The millions of Americans living within territories, including those in my district, are no less American than those living within the fifty states.

“The Supreme Court yesterday heard the argument to correct the injustice that body made over a hundred years ago. The *Insular Cases*, decided on racist theories, still cast a dark shadow over our country and its promise of equality under the law even today. During oral arguments in *Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico v. Aurelius Investment LLC*, Attorney Jessica E. Mendez-Colberg stated, ‘*when there is a constitutional injury, justice requires a remedy*,’ that remedy is long overdue. In *Financial Oversight BD.v. Aurelius Investment*, the Supreme Court is being asked to decide whether a constitutional provision that ordinarily limits Congress applies when Congress legislates for a territory.

“As the Supreme Court prepares to consider this case, I joined a resolution Chairman Raúl M. Grijalva will introduce this week that rejects the use of the Insular Cases in present and future cases and controversies. I hope my colleagues will also support this resolution.

“Our territorial status is eerily similar to the status of the original 13 colonies to the British government. Today, the unequal footing of the territories in voting power, proximity to the mainland, funding formulas and resources of our country continue to keep the Virgin Islands from becoming all that we can be much as it kept the colonial America from realizing its full potential. How can we herald the actions of our Founding Fathers while simultaneously depriving fellow Americans of the same rights those Founding Fathers fought so hard to achieve? Just as the colonists, we are subjected to the laws of an unrepresentational government. But just as the colonists, we will not stop fighting for the same representation that every other great American enjoys. A people who have made great contributions to this country — including Alexander Hamilton, Denmark Vessey, and Tim Duncan — still do not have equal citizenship. Democracy is not complete.”