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Sarauw Was Indeed Top Vote-Getter, Election System Says, Admitting to Error (Update)

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Ernice Gilbert **November 05, 2020**

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Update: Nov. 18, 2020: The Election System of the Virgin Islands has provided its [final 2020 election data](#), which shows Senators Donna Frett-Gregory and Janelle Sarauw switching positions again, with Ms. Frett-Gregory taking the top spot in the last vote tally.

Original story: The Election System of the Virgin Islands said Thursday that it erred when election night numbers showed Sen. Donna Frett-Gregory as the top vote-getter in the St. Thomas-St. John District. The system said it was Sen. Janelle Sarauw who stood atop the list in the district, finishing with 4,248 to Ms. Frett-Gregory's 4,223. On election night the Election System had Ms. Frett-Gregory with 6,454 votes to Ms. Sarauw's 6,357.

So, what went wrong? According to the Election System, it inadvertently doubled the senators' totals by adding early voting results with election day votes.

"After the reading of the St. Thomas-St. John early voting results on November 3, the at-polls results were inadvertently combined with the STT-STJ District early voting results when submitted to the St. Croix District for final merger, as per established protocol," the Election System said. "This combination of results caused a duplication of the STT-STJ early voting numbers."

The Election System said the conducting of audit reviews is typical in elections to ensure accuracy of unofficial results.

"The audit verified the standing of no other candidates has been affected," said the Election System. The system added that official results will be released on November 14. "The Election System apologizes for any inconvenience which has occurred and is committed to continue to operate in a fair, accessible, secure and transparent manner."

The new results in the St. Thomas-St. John District are as follows:

- Janelle K. Sarauw — 4,248
- Donna Frett-Gregory — 4,223
- Milton E. Potter — 3,931
- Carla Jospeh — 3,587
- Alma Francis Heyliger — 3,572
- Marvin A. Blyden — 3,565
- Dwayne M. DeGraff — 3,066
- Athneil Thomas — 2,760
- Stedmann Hodge, Jr. — 2,690
- Stephen Frett — 2,350
- Jonathan P. Tucker — 2,175
- Ray Fonseca — 2,104
- Irvin Mason — 2,031
- Wayne Adams — 644
- Write-in totals — 230

The results represent a meteoric surge for Ms. Sarauw, who came in 6th place during the 2018 General Election. The results are owing to the senator's penchant for studying her craft, doing research and not being afraid to ask the tough questions during Senate hearings. During the 33rd Legislature, Ms. Sarauw drafted over 50 bills and moved over 20, a solid performance.

On St. Croix, Senator Kurt Vialet, one of Ms. Sarauw's collaborators in the Legislature, [maintained his number 1 position](#), a testament to Mr. Vialet's staying power in the Legislature. The powerful Finance Committee chairman has also moved a litany of bills during his tenure, with one of his most standout measures being a bill that [established a bachelor's degree in nursing program](#) at the University of the Virgin Islands, which has [proven to be a success](#) over the years. The senator has also moved bills affecting everything from the Government Employees' Retirement System, to the V.I. Water and Power Authority.

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