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34th Legislature to Form 10-Member Majority Caucus With Frett-Gregory as Senate President

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Senator Donna Frett-Gregory during the 33rd Legislature's last session. By. BARRY LEERDAM, VI LEGISLATURE

The V.I. Legislature late Monday announced the makeup of the incoming 34th Legislature, a body that is [scheduled to be sworn into office](#) on Jan. 11. The 34th Legislature will form a 10-member majority and has announced new officers and committee leadership.

As reported by the Consortium [early November](#), Senator Donna Frett-Gregory will be the new Senate president, with Senator Kurt Vialet keeping the Committee on Finance, and Senator Janelle Sarauw — who is not part of the majority caucus — losing chairmanship of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary, which she held in the 33rd body. Rules and Judiciary will be chaired by

freshman Senator Milton E. Potter.

Senator Novelle Francis, the outgoing Senate president, will be named vice president of the Senate, while Senator Kenneth Gittens will be announced as majority leader. Senator-elect Genevieve Whitaker has been nominated to serve as Senate secretary.

The other four members, all who secured their seats in the 2020 General Election as Democrats, will be: Marvin A. Blyden, Javan E. James Sr., Carla Joseph and Steven D. Payne Sr., according to the release.

Senators not included in the majority caucus are Ms. Sarauw, Samuel Carrion, Franklin Johnson, Dwayne DeGraff and Alma Francis Heyliger — all Independent candidates in the 2020 General Election.

“Our goal is to put together a coordinated and focused agenda in order to best address some of the pressing concerns of this Territory,” Ms. Frett-Gregory said Monday. “We will be working beyond the regular committee process and setting up focused groups inclusive of all members of the body to hone in on the issues”

The majority caucus has identified the prime areas of concern as health, public safety, hurricane recovery, and addressing reforms and shortfalls at the Government Employees Retirement System, according to the release.

“These are all key components in shoring up our economic base,” said Mr. Gittens. “We must help our small businesses rebuild and put displaced Virgin Islanders back to work.”

Ms. Frett-Gregory said her “fervent hope is that the issues of the day will drive the discussion and collaboration of all senators of the 34th Legislature – regardless of what side of the aisle one may stand on. My role is to make sure every senator is treated with fairness and respect and the business of the institution is executed with a degree of professionalism.”

She added, “There is much work to be done as we begin our recovery from the economic and social impacts of coronavirus which requires all 15 Senators working together. The Caucus intends to engage in productive dialogue and anticipate good working relationships with the five unaligned senators.”

The 34th Legislature will be sworn in on Monday, January 11. Once the Oath of Office has been administered, senators will convene for the body’s inaugural session and formally vote on the body’s officers, committee assignments, and rules, the release stated.

34th Legislature’s Proposed Committees and Chairpersons:

1. Committee on Rules and Judiciary, Chair: Senator-elect Milton E. Potter
2. Committee on Finance, Chair: Senator Kurt A. Vialet
3. Committee on Health, Hospitals & Human Services, Chair: Senator Novelle E. Francis Jr.
4. Committee on Education and Workforce Development, Chair: Senator-elect Genevieve Whitaker
5. Committee on Youth, Sports, Parks/recreation & Culture, Chair: Senator Javan E. James Sr.
6. Committee on Economic Development & Agriculture, Chair: Senator Kenneth L. Gittens
7. Committee on Homeland Security, Justice, Public Safety & Veterans Affairs, Chair: Senator Steven D. Payne Sr.
8. Committee on Government Operations, Chair: Senator-elect Carla Joseph

9. Committee on Housing, Transportation & Infrastructure/ Telecommunications, Chair:
Senator Marvin A. Blyden
10. Committee of the Whole, Chair: Senator Donna M. Frett-Gregory

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