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Blyden: 'I Am Deeply Sorry and I Humbly Apologize,' Says He Did Not Place People at Risk, Blames 'Pandemic Fatigue'

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Senator Marvin Blyden. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

Senator Marvin Blyden in a mea culpa Monday night profusely apologized to the Virgin Islands public for [flouting V.I. Department of Health Covid-19 protocols over the weekend](#), stating in a release that he had a "terrible lapse of judgement for failing to set an example as a community leader" when he attended an entertainment function after testing positive for Covid-19.

But in the same release, Mr. Blyden sought to remove himself from possible punishment under V.I. law, contending that he would never knowingly expose others to Covid-19. The senator's rationale is that after testing positive for Covid-19 at the V.I. Legislature and the V.I. Dept. of

Health, he performed three consecutive home tests which returned negative results. Further, he now states that his tests were performed on Tuesday, with the Legislature's test results returning the same day and the Dept. of Health's on Wednesday. The entertainment event Mr. Blyden attended took place Saturday night at Tillet Gardens, St. Thomas.

Title 14, Chapter 43, Section 886 of V.I. Code states, *"Whoever willfully exposes himself or another afflicted with any contagious or infectious disease in any public place or thoroughfare, except in his necessary removal in a manner the least dangerous to the public health, shall be fined not more than \$200 or imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both."*

The senator said the three home tests were performed on Sept. 16th, 17th and 18th, all of which he said returned negative results. He said one of the tests shows an erroneous date of July, 16, 2021.

Mr. Blyden, currently the Senate majority leader, provided to the Consortium what he said was a negative test result from one of his home kits. However, the date showed July, 16, 2021. The date appeared to have been hand-written. Someone also wrote Mr. Blyden's name on the Abbott-branded test kit. Mr. Blyden told the Consortium he would provide proof of the Sept. 17 and 18 tests, but as of Tuesday morning had not done so.

Mr. Blyden said based on his home tests, "I realized that either there had been some false positives on Tuesday, or that I had been an asymptomatic person who had already gone through the course of the disease and was in the very last days of the virus when I was tested on Tuesday."

During a Sunday interview, Mr. Blyden said he contended the Dept. of Health's and the Legislature's Covid test results because he was showing no symptoms. "That's dangerous. If you take the vaccine and don't have no kind of symptoms, that's a problem because you could be infecting people if you don't test everyday." The Consortium reminded the senator that some individuals who contract Covid-19 are asymptomatic, meaning they exhibit no symptoms.

In his statement Tuesday, the senator described himself as a "workaholic" who "simply don't do well sitting down." Relative to the entertainment event he attended at Tillet Gardens Saturday night using the government's Legislature-issued LEG 5 vehicle, an event that included roughly 70 people, Mr. Blyden said he attended because he had investors in the territory. "I had a meeting scheduled for Saturday night with some potential investors who had already flown down for the meeting, and I let my desire for economic development opportunities for our people overcome my better judgement and common sense." Mr. Blyden did not provide information on who those potential investors were, or the industry they would be interested in. It was also unclear as to why the meeting could not be conducted virtually.

On Sunday, he told the Consortium, "I had a meeting, man. I had a very important meeting. I had a very important meeting with someone."

The senator moved on to state that regardless of his desire to see economic growth or what he believed he knew, "I should have followed the guidelines set by the Department of Health and the CDC. Plain and simple, regardless of my intentions, my actions were wrong. I am deeply sorry, and I humbly apologize to the people of the Virgin Islands."

Mr. Blyden on multiple occasions stressed he did not knowingly place anyone in danger. "Although I acknowledge and apologize for my error in violating the isolation guidelines, I want to make it clear that at no time did I act in a manner that I believed would endanger the public or any individual," he said.

Mr. Blyden expressed his love for the territory and its people, and said, "You also know that I take this virus seriously and have been at the forefront of legislative and community efforts to address this pandemic."

He concluded, "Like many of us, I succumbed to pandemic fatigue and I made a terrible error, but I in no way meant to harm anyone, or to minimize the importance of doing everything that we can to protect ourselves and each other.

"I know how many people have lost family members and friends to this terrible disease, and I know that countless others have been impacted by this disease, physically, emotionally, economically and in so many other ways. I am in this struggle with you, and I pray that this episode will be a teaching moment for all of us, as it has been for me. We cannot, as individuals or as a society, afford to be careless, to let down our guard or to become weary.

"I committed this error, I apologize for it, and pledge to grow and learn from it. I also ask your forgiveness and your support as we continue to work together for a better quality of life for all Virgin Islanders."

The 34th Legislature on Monday [convened a Committee on Ethical Conduct](#) to investigate Mr. Blyden's actions. Senate leadership further filed a complaint with the ethics committee following a meeting with Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory, Vice President Novelle Francis, and Senate Secretary Genevieve Whitaker. "I have asked the committee to convene by the end of this week to conduct the investigatory work. Once they have conducted their investigatory work and they send their report up to the Senate president and the entire body, we will move forward with the next steps," Ms. Frett-Gregory told the Consortium. "We cannot take this matter lightly because based on the information that has been shared with us, this matter is very egregious in nature."