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Senate Committee on Ethical Conduct Charges Blyden With Violation of Oath of Office; Senator Has 20 Days to Respond Ahead of Disciplinary Hearing

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Senator Marvin Blyden. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

The Senate Committee on Ethical Conduct on Monday announced that Senator Marvin Blyden, a member of the 34th Legislature, has been charged with violating three rules governing the comportment of members of the body, including breaking his sworn oath of office.

"After a preliminary examination of the evidence, to include reviewing witness testimony, the 34th Legislature's Committee on Ethical Conduct (CEC) has determined that grounds exist to move forward with a formal disciplinary hearing regarding the complaint that Senator Marvin A. Blyden is in violation of at least two of the rules governing the comportment of members of the

body and breaking his sworn Oath of Office," stated the CEC in its release.

Mr. Blyden was served on Friday, October 8 with a letter outlining the charges against him, all of which are related to failing to quarantine after testing positive for Covid-19, the CEC release stated. Pursuant to the Legislature rules, he now has up to 20 days to respond to the CEC's "Statement of Alleged Violations".

"Whether Senator Blyden chooses to formally answer to these charges or not, a disciplinary hearing will be held, and the Committee will make a final recommendation to the full body as to what punitive or corrective actions, if any, are most appropriate," CEC Chairman Sen. Milton Potter said. "It is important to note that as an elected member of the Legislature, Senator Blyden is entitled to, and will continue to receive a fair hearing on all charges."

"As I have said before, as elected officials we must hold ourselves to a higher standard," Vice Chairman Sen. Kenneth Gittens said. "We would like to address this matter as quickly as possible, but we must follow the procedural Rules of the 34th Legislature. The sooner Senator Blyden answers these charges, the sooner we can bring this matter to final resolution."

The CEC has charged Mr. Blyden with breaking the Legislature's rules for decorum and ethical conduct, as well as with violating the oath of office, in which elected officials swear to uphold the Constitution and the laws of the Virgin Islands. See the charging document [here](#).

"We have detailed these three charges in our letter to Senator Blyden," Mr. Potter concluded.

Members of the Committee on Ethical Conduct also include Senators Dwayne M. Degraff, Carla J. Joseph and Kurt A. Vialet.

The Consortium [reported exclusively on Monday, Sept. 20 that Mr. Blyden had flouted Dept. of Health Covid-19 protocols](#) when he went to an event with scores of people in attendance two days after testing positive for Covid-19. Mr. Blyden said he was first tested at the Legislature on Tues., Sept. 14 and refused to believe he was positive, so he sought another test at the V.I. Dept. of Health, which also returned positive Wednesday, Sept. 15. The senator said he was advised by D.O.H. to quarantine for 10 days. However, instead of following the health department's protocols, Mr. Blyden said he tested at home several times after and those tests came back negative. That prompted the senator to attend the function at Tillet Gardens using a government-owned, Legislature-issued, LEG 5 vehicle on the night of Saturday, Sept. 18.

After the matter was exposed, separate investigations were launched by the V.I. Dept. of Justice and the V.I. Legislature. The V.I. D.O.J. charged Mr. Blyden with willfully exposing the public to a contagious disease after testing positive for Covid-19. The first court hearing [was held on Oct. 1](#), where more information was revealed, including allegations that the senator had parked the government vehicle he drove to the Tillet Gardens event in a handicapped parking space, according to court documents. Court documents also state that the V.I. Dept. of Health imposed a no-fly order on Mr. Blyden following information that he intended to leave the territory on September 21st for a family vacation in Hawaii. Mr. Blyden [has disputed this claim](#).

