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# Senate Will Have 15 Days to Take Action on Recommendations Made by Ethics Committee Regarding Blyden's Covid-19 Scandal

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## Senator Marvin Blyden By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

While the Committee on Ethical Conduct, or CEC — formed by Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory to address the flouting of Covid-19 protocols by Senator Marvin Blyden — was unable to bring a resolution during the Nov. 18 Senate session, the CEC said it met no Nov. 12 and on Wednesday notified Mr. Blyden of the recommended sanctions levied against him.

The hearing is a result of Mr. Blyden's failure to quarantine after testing positive for Covid-19, per the protocols and guidelines of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the V.I. Department of Health. "Overall, CEC reviewed documents, took statements, and afforded Senator

Blyden, the right to be heard. Final recommendations will be shared with the full body in a formal resolution," stated the release.

Pursuant to the Rules of the 34th Legislature, the Senate will have 15 business days to vote on the CEC's disciplinary recommendation. Senator Milton Potter, who chairs the CEC, mentioned that in coordination with the Office of the Senate President, at a scheduled legislative session the resolution will be considered and the public will be notified accordingly.

Milton Potter also indicated that the matter will be handled with fairness and due process. "As the respondent, Senator Blyden is entitled to participate in the debate process. While I can appreciate the public's desire for a swift and public hearing, this is essentially a Human Resources matter governed by the Rules of the 34th Legislature," he said. "Much of the process is required to be conducted in private until the recommended sanction is debated, by the Senate."

According to the release, throughout this entire situation, the CEC, with guidance from the Legislature of the Virgin Islands Chief Legal Counsel, has meticulously and diligently followed the procedures outlined in the Rules of the 34th Legislature.

Prior to hospitalization, CEC Vice Chairman Senator Kenneth Gittens spoke to the issue of elected officials holding themselves to a higher standard. "A senator shall conduct him/herself at all times in a manner complementary to the Senate; with dignity and respect for the office we hold," Mr. Gittens said.

Additional members of the Committee on Ethical Conduct are senators Dwayne M. DeGraff, Carla J. Joseph, and Kurt A. Vialet. All members including legal counsel were present for the CEC hearing held on November 12, according to the release.

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.

The V.I. Dept. of Justice [filed criminal charges against the senator](#) and on Oct. 1 Judge Henry Carr stated that the court found probable cause for the complaint against him. Mr. Blyden appeared virtually, accompanied by Attorney Dwayne Henry, who asked that his client be released on his own recognizance. Attorney Rob Barchiesi appearing for the people, raised no objection to the request, noting the senator's substantial ties to the community. Judge Carr concluded that the senator would be released on his own recognizance, noting that this has been his practice when a criminal matter is initiated by way of a summons and the defendant honors that summons, as is the case in this matter.

Mr. Blyden's trial has a tentative date of April 2022.