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Bryan Has Edge Over Violet in First Reputable Gubernatorial Polling Performed; Blyden, Joseph, Payne and Whitaker Struggling in Senate Contest

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Early polling performed by USVI-based analytics firm IAM LLC reveal a close contest between Governor Bryan and contender Kurt Violet, with Bryan having the edge. By. IAM LLC

Local firm Island Analytics has begun its polling work for the upcoming 2022 USVI election cycle, and the first set of results are now in.

IAM LLC surveyed more than 400 Virgin Islanders to find out their views on potential gubernatorial candidates that are expected to contest the November elections. Consortium journalists spoke to Richard Dorsey of Island Analytics about the methodology behind the survey,

and he explained that some responses were weighted to ensure a more accurate picture was presented.

“St. Croix resident responses were higher than the other islands, so we weighted or rather adjusted the overall responses against the current registered voters populations for each island to ensure that our data was representative for each island. We did this specifically for the overall gubernatorial race territory-wide, as well as the overall satisfaction rate for the governor’s performance,” Mr. Dorsey explained.

Responses indicate that as it stands currently across the territory, incumbent Governor Albert Bryan has the edge with 33 percent, with Senator Kurt Vialet in second place with 29 percent. The third most popular choice for governor among survey respondents? Nobody. Sixteen percent of participants said they would vote for none of the proposed candidates.

Breaking down the numbers per island tells a slightly different story. On St. Croix, the island which Vialet represents in the Senate, he was the preferred candidate for governor by a large margin, while on St. Thomas and St. John Governor Bryan was the top choice.

IAM’s survey also asked respondents about how satisfied they were with the performances of their senators and governor. Survey results suggested that most participants were dissatisfied with Governor Bryan’s performance, with St. Croix residents being his sharpest critics. In all three islands, rates of dissatisfaction were measured at above 50 percent.

The level of satisfaction with the performance of senators in each district was measured and expressed by rankings. On St. Croix, Senator Vialet was ranked 1st, followed by Senator Novelle Francis and then Senator Kenneth Gittens in 3rd place. In order after that were Senators Sammuell Carrion, Franklin Johnson, with Sens. Javan James and Genevieve Whitaker trailing.

The St. Thomas-St. John rankings place President of the 34th Legislature Senator Donna Frett-Gregory first followed by Senator Janelle Sauraw and Senator Milton Potter in 3rd place. Senators Dwayne De Graff, Alma Francis-Heyliger, Carla Joseph followed in ranked order, with Marvin Blyden, [currently facing criminal charges in a quarantine breach scandal](#), in last place when it comes to voter satisfaction.

Fifty-seven percent of survey respondents on the island of St. John were dissatisfied with the performance of their at-large representative, Senator Steven Payne. Mr. Payne is [currently being investigated by the Legislature after being accused of sexual harassment](#) by one of his office’s young, female employees.

The Blyden Covid-19 quarantine breach charge by the Dept. of Justice and the Payne sexual harassment investigation by the Legislature followed exclusive reporting by the Consortium.

Mr. Dorsey said he is pleased with the participation of Virgin Islanders in the IAM survey, and says that exercises like these are important for the practice of democracy in jurisdictions like the USVI.

“We’re hoping that this allows for more open dialogue and public discourse. Also, it helps to see how candidates are doing throughout the election cycle, which is something that we’re not really used to in the territory. Voters really only really get to express their opinions en masse every 2 and 4 years, and that’s something this type of polling service is able to change,” Mr. Dorsey told the Consortium. See the full polling document [here](#).

Messrs Violet and Bryan are the top contenders for the seat of governor, with Mr. Violet [announcing his bid last week](#) and so far receiving nearly 11,000 views on the Consortium, while Mr. Bryan is scheduled to announce his bid today at 6:00 p.m. after officially filing his documents for reelection at the Election System of the Virgin Islands this morning. The Consortium will carry the event live on its website and [Facebook platform](#).

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