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V.I. Democratic Party Calls on Payne to Step Down Now or Be Removed

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Senator Steven Payne Sr. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

Update: About an hour after the Democratic Party issued its statement calling on Sen. Steven Payne to step down, the New Horizon Women's Democratic Club added its voice in support.

A statement issued on Thursday afternoon by the club says that while the organization supports and believes in due process, they nevertheless urge the senator to vacate his position in the 34th Legislature while he addresses the allegations against him. "As women we cannot stand by one minute longer and allow any person accused of heinous crimes against women to represent us," the statement reads in part. Not only does the Club say Payne should leave the Senate, but they also think that he should withdraw from the up-coming electoral contest for the at-large seat in the

35th Legislature.

View the full statement from the New Horizon Women's Democratic Club [here](#).

Original Story: Following the [bombshell allegations against Senator Payne](#), who now stands accused by a 3rd woman of inappropriate and potentially criminal behavior towards her when she was a minor, the Democratic Party of the U.S. Virgin Islands is the first institution to call for Payne's immediate resignation.

The one-paragraph statement, issued on May, reads as follows:

“The allegations against Senator Stephen Payne are serious and egregious.

"The Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands stands up for and respects all women and children. While everyone is innocent until proven guilty, it is the position of the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands that in light of the gravity of the charges, the senator should step down as a candidate in the interests of the party he represents and to preserve the integrity of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands. If that does not happen on his own accord, we call on the Legislature to remove him.”

On Wednesday, Consortium journalists published excerpts of an exclusive interview with Steffi Emilien, a 21-year old Saint Lucian woman who says that she was sent to the USVI to live as a child, and enrolled in the Julius E Sprauve School, to which Payne was assigned when he was a VIPD officer. She first met Payne when she joined the V.I. Avengerz, the band he co-managed. Emilien said that Payne first offered her protection as a father figure shortly after her living conditions deteriorated, but used that access to behave inappropriately towards her on at least three occasions. She said that first, Payne kissed her on the mouth in a band room on St. John, and that following her relocation to Florida in the aftermath of the 2017 hurricane, he approached her twice more — first requesting a naked massage followed by a shower when they were in a hotel room on the way to Universal Studios, and then confronting her with a sex toy while they were in his sister's Jacksonville residence.

Before and since the reporting was published, Consortium journalists have not been able to reach Senator Payne despite numerous attempts to contact him directly, his office, and his chief of staff. While the Party of which Payne is a member is the first institution to call on the at-large senator to resign, Consortium journalists understand that a number of members of the 34th Legislature are also mulling over their options when it comes to how to deal with these new allegations.

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