

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Johnson Lashes Out at Frett-Gregory as Colleagues Call on Him to Focus on Public Affairs

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**Senator Franklin Johnson. By. THE V.I. LEGISLATURE**

Senator Franklin Johnson made it a point of duty to reserve his time in the Legislature on Wednesday to reprimand the Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory.

Mr. Johnson said he was defending himself when he verbally thrashed the president of the Senate, accusing her of continuously cancelling sessions and being disrespectful to Senate members. The senator has apparently taken umbrage with a call by Mrs. Frett-Gregory [for a federal investigation](#) to be launched after a letter was sent to the Legislature through the U.S. Postal Service defaming all senators with the exception of

Steven Payne Sr.

"You have disrespected each and every female in this building here," he said, recalling that the president once called a senator "dumb".

"I have sat here and looked at all the disrespect. There isn't a person in this body here that you haven't disrespect but you turn around and say I have been disrespectful to woman.

"I can look and say all these people who left this building under your watch because of the disrespect that you have had for the people in this body here."

Mr. Johnson did not stop there, telling the Senate president that the only reason "a coup" did not remove her from the Senate was because "there was nobody from St. Thomas to put in the seat at the time." That was before he claimed that she would "walk on anybody" to become governor of the Virgin Islands in the next four years, claiming, "Your plan is to run in four years and you plan to walk on anybody to make sure that you could do what you want to do in four years' time, but I will be there in St. Croix, whether I there in this Senate or not, waiting for your arrival."

"It's been a little too long and you have crossed the line with the wrong person and I assure you that this is a battle that will go on til the end," Mr. Johnson said as he vowed to continue his tirade during his contributions to various bills.

A number of senators rose to caution Mr. Johnson against causing division in the Senate, with Senator Javan James being the first to encourage him to remain focused on the business of the people.

"Let us remain focused. We have a lot of distractions going on here in the U.S. Virgin Islands, we have a unique opportunity in the U.S Virgin Islands where we have federal funds for Covid-19, for Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Let us continue to work together. And I know it's not going to be kumbaya every day, we're going to have our differences but let us focus on moving forward with the people's business," he said.

"Let's not go down that fox hole," remarked Senator Milton Potter. "This community is banking on us as leaders of this community to make sure that we rise to the occasion."

"Let's not utilize rancor to be the rule of the day but rather let's come together, united in pride and hope, to move this territory forward," he added.

"The tone that we are setting and the example that we as leaders set is critical to how our community reacts to each of us in our capacities. We have to have that element of respect and demonstrate that element of love and respect to each other," inserted Senator Carla Joseph.

While Senator Kenneth Gittens said he understood the "frustration" of Senator Johnson, he too reminded him that they were there to conduct the business of the Senate.

Mrs. Frett-Gregory wasted no time in responding to Senator Johnson, noting her exemplary achievements as a first-time senator.

“We don’t have time for the negative energy. We have time to push this territory forward because the people of the United States Virgin Islands are banking on every single one of us that they entrusted their lives with when they said yes to the vote,” she stated.

“As a freshman senator, this senator moved 40-plus pieces of legislation and as Senate president, I continue to work and I have moved well over 20 as Senate president. So, if we want to talk about the work of the people, let’s do that because that’s why we’re here,” she touted.

The hours-long session concluded with the passage of several bills, including an Act approving the Lease Agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands and the V.I. Waste Management Authority to construct and operate solid [waste convenience centers in plots on St. Croix](#); an amendment to allow the Supervisor of Elections to compile an active vs. inactive voter’s list within 90 days after each General Election starting with the General Election in 2022; and an Act to set the time for early voting and to provide for all persons eligible to vote in elections in the Virgin Islands to be entitled to vote in any election by absentee ballot. (A story with all approved measures is forthcoming.)

At that session, Senator Steven Payne Sr. [was also expelled from the 34 Legislature](#) over allegations of sexual misconduct.