

## **Majority Leader says newly-reorganized Majority Caucus will relentlessly pursue the people's business**

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ST. THOMAS, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – Unity and transparency are still at the heart of the newly-reorganized Majority Caucus, Majority Leader Marvin A. Blyden said Thursday in a news conference with members of the Caucus.

"If you take note, you will see that there are six senators in this majority that were here when we first formed in December," the Senator remarked. "What you see before you is not a new and different team, it is a reformed and improved team that has the same nucleus as when we began."

This news conference came on the heels of Wednesday's Committee of the Whole hearing where Majority Leader Blyden special ordered a measure to the Floor that finalized the reorganization of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature's Majority Caucus. The resolution was voted on favorably with nine senators in support of the measure.

Novelle E. Francis, Jr. will serve as President with Senator Myron D. Jackson, the most senior of the members, chosen as Vice-President. Senators Alicia V. Barnes and Marvin A. Blyden will continue to serve as the Body's Secretary and Majority Leader, respectively.

Speaking on behalf of the members of the Majority, Senator Blyden said that the Caucus maintains its commitment to working together as a team to address the pressing and vexing issues that plague the Territory and work in the best interest of the people of the Virgin Islands.

"We believe, based upon our collective experience of the past five months, that the current line-up of officers and committee chairpersons is the best leadership structure that can be made with the membership of this body," said Senator Blyden. "We remain as committed in this very moment as we've been from the very beginning. We look forward to working with all of our colleagues in the interest of progressive change."

The Majority Leader pointed to a lack of communication and collaboration as the ultimate reason for the reorganization.

"Decisions were being made and negotiations were being conducted, on behalf of the majority and the Legislature, without the knowledge and approval of the Caucus," he shared. "The members of the Majority had no choice but to come together and make a change so that the body could move forward and relentlessly pursue the people's business."

Senator Blyden also addressed concerns about a non-Democrat being a member of what was previously, an all-Democrat Majority. He reminded Virgin Islands Democrats that the inclusion of non-Democratic members has been a long-standing practice of the Virgin Islands Legislature. He went further to highlight that various majorities selected non-Democratic presidents, vice-presidents and majority leaders, while still maintaining a symbiotic relationship with Democratic administrations.

"Regardless of party affiliation, our job as senators is to work collectively for the benefit of all Virgin Islanders, not just Democrats, Independents, Republicans, or ICM'ers," the Senator said. "If you look at the history of this body over the last thirty years, you will find that out of the last fifteen legislatures, only three or four had majorities that were solely made up of Democrats."

The Senator concluded by encouraging the Democratic Party to re-engage voters who have stayed away or drifted away from the Party and work to attract young voters. He also reiterated the importance of moving forward and making the necessary changes for the good of the Legislature and more importantly, the good of the people of the Territory.

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