



# Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

2026 PRIMARY ELECTION AND  
CERTIFICATION PLAN

Prepared by the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands  
Carol M. Burke, State Chairwoman

## CHAIRWOMAN'S FOREWORD

From the Office of the State Chairwoman

The creation of this 2026 Primary Election and Certification Plan represents a pivotal step in strengthening the institutional capacity and political maturity of the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands (DPVI). For too long, the Party's constitutional rights were constrained by administrative practice. With the federal court's decision in *Republican Party of the Virgin Islands v. Election System of the Virgin Islands* (Case No. 3:22-cv-0049, Molloy, Jan. 10, 2024), the principle we have long upheld was affirmed: the authority to determine who represents Democrats on the ballot is a core Party function, not a government courtesy.

This Plan is more than a set of dates or requirements. It is a statement of Party sovereignty, a declaration of our First Amendment rights, and a comprehensive guide for fair, transparent, and disciplined certification. It ensures that every Democrat seeking the privilege of appearing on our ballot does so through the will of our members and in full accordance with standards established and enforced by the Democratic Party.

As Chairwoman, I affirm that this document is designed to safeguard the rights of Democratic voters, protect ballot integrity, and strengthen Party unity. I extend deep appreciation to all Committee members who contributed to its development and to every Democrat committed to fairness, transparency, and purpose in our electoral process.

— Carol M. Burke  
State Chairwoman  
Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS

This *2026 Primary Election and Certification Plan* was developed through the collective insight, guidance, and commitment of the following bodies:

- Primary Election Ad Hoc Committee
- Election Oversight Committee
- Executive Committee of the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands

Their dedication to Party governance, electoral fairness, and ballot integrity is hereby formally recognized and entered into the official record. The Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands expresses its gratitude to each member whose service and leadership have strengthened our institution and advanced the principles of democracy across our Territory.

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## 1 Title, Authority, and Purpose

### 1.1 Authority

This *Primary Election and Certification Plan* is adopted under the authority of the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands (DPVI), pursuant to its Bylaws and the Party's constitutional right to free association under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

This Plan also implements the ruling in *Republican Party of the Virgin Islands v. Election System of the Virgin Islands*, Case No. 3:22-cv-0049 (Chief Judge Robert Molloy, January 10, 2024), which affirmed that:

“Certification and qualification of political party candidates is an internal Party function that may not be overridden or substituted by a government agency.”

Under Title 18 of the Virgin Islands Code, the Election System of the Virgin Islands (ESVI) may administer the Democratic Primary ballot only after receiving the certified list of candidates from the DPVI State Chair. ESVI's function in this context is strictly *ministerial*.

### 1.2 Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of this Plan is to:

1. Establish a clear, transparent, and fair process for nominating candidates for public office and internal DPVI positions in the 2026 election cycle.
2. Affirm DPVI's exclusive authority to determine candidate eligibility, endorsement requirements, dues verification, and certification.
3. Clarify the separation of responsibility between DPVI and ESVI to prevent administrative overlap.
4. Provide a uniform timeline, dispute resolution process, and certification procedure that uphold fairness and Party discipline.
5. Promote access, confidence, and unity among members of the Democratic electorate.
6. Maintain full compliance with territorial election law while protecting DPVI's constitutional autonomy under the First Amendment.

## 2 Definitions

For clarity and consistent application, the following definitions shall apply throughout this Plan:

Term	Definition
DPVI Member	A registered Democrat in the U.S. Virgin Islands who is in good standing under the DPVI Bylaws and dues requirements.
Candidate in Good Standing	A DPVI Member who has fulfilled all Party requirements, including completion of the loyalty pledge, payment of dues, meeting endorsement thresholds, and maintaining a record free of unresolved disciplinary action.
Public Office Candidate	A Democrat seeking nomination for Governor/Lieutenant Governor, Delegate to Congress, Senator (District or At-Large), or membership

Term	Definition
	on the Board of Elections or Board of Education through the Democratic Primary.
Internal Party Officer Candidate	A Democrat seeking election to an internal Party position, including State Chair, National Committeewoman or Committeeman, Treasurer, District Chair, or Territorial Committee Member.
Certification — DPVI Authority	The formal act by which the DPVI State Chair confirms candidate eligibility and transmits the certified list of names to the Election System of the Virgin Islands (ESVI) for ballot placement.
Certification — ESVI Ministerial Role	The administrative act of placing names on the ballot as supplied by DPVI. ESVI may not alter, substitute, or review the Party’s certified list.
Endorsement (Internal Mechanism)	A written or electronic declaration of support from a DPVI Territorial or District Committee Member in good standing.
Neutrality Obligation	The duty of certification and election officers to remain impartial in all races under their supervision.
Judicial Council (DPVI)	The internal body is authorized to resolve disputes concerning eligibility, endorsements, or certification.
Ministerial Function	A limited administrative task without discretionary authority, as affirmed in <i>Republican Party of the Virgin Islands v. Election System of the Virgin Islands</i> (2024).
Good Standing Roster	The official list maintained by DPVI identifies members eligible to vote, endorse, or seek office within the Party.

### 3 Guiding Principles

#### 3.1 Party Autonomy

The Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands (DPVI) retains full and exclusive authority to determine which individuals may be certified to appear as Democratic candidates.

This authority is protected by the **First Amendment** and reaffirmed by the 2024 Molloy ruling.

#### 3.2 Coordination Without Surrender

DPVI coordinates with the **Election System of the Virgin Islands (ESVI)** only for ballot administration and logistical support—not certification.

Only names certified by the DPVI State Chair shall appear on the Democratic ballot.

#### 3.3 Transparency

All procedures related to candidate filing, eligibility verification, and certification shall be published to Party members through official DPVI communication channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

### 3.4 Fair Access

All Democrats in good standing shall have equal opportunity to seek nomination under impartial and consistent procedures established by DPVI.

### 3.5 Integrity and Neutrality

Members serving on certification, judicial, or election oversight committees must act without factional bias or candidate preference in races under their supervision. Violations of neutrality or integrity standards shall be subject to disciplinary review by the **Judicial Council**.

## 4 Election Structure and Candidate Categories

### 4.1 Public Office Candidates

Candidates seeking election to public office under the Democratic Party banner include those running for Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Delegate to Congress, Senator (District or At-Large), as well as for the Board of Elections and the Board of Education.

Such candidates must file with both the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands (DPVI) and the Election System of the Virgin Islands (ESVI). However, only certification by DPVI authorizes inclusion on the Democratic ballot.

ESVI's role in this process is *ministerial*—limited to the administrative task of placing certified names on the ballot as provided by DPVI.

### 4.2 Internal Party Officer Candidates

Internal Party offices include State Chair, National Committeewoman, National Committeeman, Treasurer, District Chairs, and Territorial Committee Members, among others.

Candidates for these positions file directly with DPVI.

Certification and ballot preparation for internal elections are conducted exclusively under DPVI authority. While ESVI may assist with logistical functions such as printing or tabulation if engaged, it holds no authority over the certification or validation of internal results.

### 4.3 Certification Summary Table

Process Step	DPVI Authority	ESVI Role
Filing Receipt	Yes (DPVI)	Yes (ministerial notice only)
Eligibility Review	Yes (DPVI Committees)	None
Certification Signature	Yes (State Chair)	None
Ballot Placement	No (Not DPVI function)	Yes (ministerial task)
Internal Office Result Certification	Yes (State Chair)	None
Dispute Adjudication	Yes (Judicial Council)	None

## 5 Timeline & Milestones

Phase	Activity	Responsible Entity	Deadline / Target Date
Planning & Drafting	Draft and approve the Primary Election and Certification Plan	Primary Election Ad Hoc Committee	Final Draft: September 19, 2025
Review and Referral to Executive Committee	Review and transmit Plan for executive input	Election Oversight Committee	September 19, 2025
Executive Review & Introduction	Executive Committee receives and reviews Plan	Executive Committee	September 22, 2025
Formal Introduction to Party Leadership	Introduce Plan to full Party leadership for discussion	Primary Election Committee	October 24, 2025
Territorial Committee Ratification	Ratification vote on adoption of the Plan	Territorial Committee	October 25, 2025
Certification Calendar Publication	Issue DPVI Certification Calendar and Filing Packets	State Chair & DPVI Secretary	No later than January 15, 2026
Candidate Filing — Public Office	Submit filings, endorsements, pledge, and fees to DPVI and ESVI	Candidates	Spring 2026 (per DPVI & ESVI calendars)
Candidate Filing — Internal Offices	Submit filings to DPVI (ESVI logistical role only, if used)	Candidates	Spring 2026 (per DPVI calendar)
Certification Action	Issue Official Certified List and transmit to ESVI	State Chair	Before ESVI statutory deadline
Campaign Period Begins	Launch official DPVI candidate forums and outreach	Forum Committee & Candidates	Upon issuance of DPVI Certification Notice
Primary Election — Public Offices	Administer public office primary elections	Election System of the Virgin Islands	August 1, 2026
Internal DPVI Elections	Conduct Party officer elections (may use ESVI vendor services)	Election Oversight Committee	August–September 2026
Public Vote Certification	Certify vote totals for public office races	Election System of the Virgin Islands	Within 24 hours of vote count
Internal Election Certification	Certify internal DPVI election results	State Chair	Within 24 hours of vote count
Post-Election Review & Report	Conduct an internal SWOT analysis and publish a report	Judicial Council & Election Oversight Committee	Initial review within 5 days; final report within 30 days



## 6 Candidate Eligibility, Endorsement Requirements & Integrity Standards

### 6.1 Public Office Candidates — Eligibility Requirements

To be certified by the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands (DPVI), each candidate for public office must:

1. Be a **registered Democrat** in the U.S. Virgin Islands.
2. Be a **DPVI Member in Good Standing** in accordance with Party Bylaws.
3. Meet all territorial eligibility criteria established under **Title 18, Virgin Islands Code**.
4. Submit the following documentation to DPVI:
  - Loyalty Statement and Pledge of Support
  - Filing deposit on fundraising goals (as established by the Territorial Committee)
  - Endorsement List meeting required thresholds
  - Proof of membership in good standing

Public Office	Required DPVI Endorsements
Senator (District)	5 endorsements from within the same district
Senator At-Large	10 endorsements (5 from each district)
Delegate to Congress	10 endorsements (5 from each district)
Governor/Lieutenant Governor Ticket	10 endorsements (5 from each district)
Board of Elections / Board of Education	Minimum of 5 endorsements

### 6.2 Internal DPVI Officer Candidates — Eligibility Requirements

1. Must be a DPVI Member in Good Standing.
2. Must meet all additional criteria specified in the DPVI Bylaws, including tenure and dues status.
3. Must file directly with DPVI using the prescribed form.
4. Endorsement requirements for internal positions, if applicable, shall be established by vote of the Territorial Committee.
5. Certification authority for all internal elections rests exclusively with the State Chair.

### 6.3 Integrity and Neutrality Clause

All members of the Certification Committee, Judicial Council, and Election Oversight Committee are required to maintain strict neutrality in the races they administer.

- Members may not publicly endorse, campaign for, or otherwise support any candidate participating in an election they oversee.
- Violations of neutrality or integrity standards shall result in immediate review and potential removal by the Judicial Council.

- Findings of misconduct will be recorded in the Party’s official record and may lead to disciplinary sanctions under DPVI Bylaws.

#### **6.4 FILING DEPOSITS ON FUNDRAISING GOALS**

To support Party operations, strengthen candidate readiness, and ensure viability heading into the 2026 election cycle, each candidate shall submit a **Filing Deposit on Fundraising Goals**. This deposit reflects the candidate’s commitment to meeting minimum fundraising benchmarks and demonstrates organizational capacity.

##### **6.4 Office | Filing Deposit Amount (USD) | Purpose / Notes**

Governor/Lieutenant Governor Ticket | \$500 | Applies toward minimum campaign viability goals and supports DPVI election administration costs.

Delegate to Congress | \$300 | Supports ballot preparation, communications, and candidate verification processes.

Senator (District or At-Large) | \$150 | Supports DPVI district engagement, outreach, and mandatory candidate training activities.

Board of Elections / Board of Education | \$100 | Supports administrative preparation and nonpartisan voter education materials.

Internal DPVI Offices (Chair, Treasurer, etc.) | \$50 | Supports internal ballot preparation, member

##### **Section 6.4.2 (Additional Provisions)**

#### **6.4.2 Additional Provisions**

- Filing Deposits are non-refundable but count toward each candidate’s minimum fundraising expectation as may be established by the DPVI Executive Committee.
- Deposits must be submitted at the time of filing together with the DPVI Filing Form, Loyalty Statement, and required Endorsement Forms.
- Proof of payment or receipt of the Filing Deposit must accompany the filing packet.
- Candidates who exceed fundraising goals while maintaining compliance with DPVI ethical and campaign rules may receive formal recognition or strategic support as determined by the Executive Committee.

## **7 Nomination and Certification Procedure**

### **7.1 Public Office Certification Sequence**

The certification of public office candidates shall follow this sequence:

1. The candidate submits the required filing documents to **DPVI**.
2. The candidate files a copy with **ESVI** for administrative notice only.
3. The **DPVI Certification Review Committee** verifies eligibility, endorsements, and dues status.
4. Upon verification, the **State Chair** signs the **Official DPVI Certified List**.
5. DPVI transmits the certified list to **ESVI**.
6. **ESVI** performs the ministerial function of placing the certified names on the ballot.
7. **ESVI** may not alter, substitute, or add names to the list provided by **DPVI**.

## 7.2 Internal DPVI Officer Certification

1. Candidates for internal Party offices shall file directly with **DPVI**.
2. The **Election Oversight Committee** reviews and verifies eligibility and good standing.
3. The **State Chair** certifies the official internal ballot.
4. **ESVI** may be contracted for technical or logistical assistance (e.g., ballot printing or counting), but certification authority remains solely with **DPVI**.

## 7.3 Certification Principles Summary

Certification Type	Certifying Authority
Public Office Ballot Certification	State Chair (DPVI)
Internal Office Result Certification	State Chair (DPVI)
Public Ballot Administration	Election System of the Virgin Islands (ministerial only)
Internal Ballot Administration (if contracted)	DPVI (logistical discretion)
Dispute Resolution Authority	DPVI Judicial Council

# 8 Transparency, Notice, and Member Access

## 8.1 Publication of Official Procedures

The **Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands (DPVI)** shall publish all official certification procedures, filing forms, endorsement sheets, and loyalty pledges no later than **January 15, 2026**.

All documents shall be made available through the following channels:

- Official DPVI website or secure digital portal
- Email distribution to members in good standing
- Public posting at DPVI Headquarters and designated District Notice Boards

The publication date shall serve as the official notice to all members of the opening of the certification process.

## 8.2 Access to Filing Records

DPVI shall maintain an official **Candidate Filing Register** documenting all submissions, endorsements, and certification actions.

- Members may request to inspect these records by submitting a written request to the **Office of the Secretary**.
- Redacted copies may be provided electronically to protect personal data while ensuring transparency.
- All filings shall be time-stamped and archived in both physical and digital form.

## 8.3 Publication of Certified Candidate List

Immediately following certification by the **State Chair**, DPVI shall:

1. Publish the certified list of candidates to members through official Party communication channels.
2. Transmit the same certified list to the **Election System of the Virgin Islands (ESVI)** for ministerial ballot placement.
3. Archive the certification notice with date and time stamps to ensure integrity and avoid disputes.

## 8.4 Equal Access to Communication Channels

DPVI-sponsored candidate forums and public communications must adhere to strict principles of neutrality and equal opportunity.

- All certified candidates must receive equal speaking time and fair access to Party-sponsored events.
- Moderators of candidate forums must remain impartial and be approved by the **Election Oversight Committee**.
- No candidate may use DPVI logos, branding, or Party communication channels (including mailing lists or social media) without explicit authorization from the **Executive Committee**.

# 9 Dispute Resolution and Timelines

## 9.1 Jurisdiction

All disputes regarding candidate eligibility, endorsement validity, or certification decisions fall exclusively under the jurisdiction of the **Judicial Council of the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands (DPVI)**.

The **Election System of the Virgin Islands (ESVI)** has no authority to adjudicate or intervene in internal Party certification matters, as affirmed in *Republican Party of the Virgin Islands v. Election System of the Virgin Islands*, Case No. 3:22-cv-0049 (2024).

## 9.2 Filing of Objections

Any member or candidate who wishes to contest a certification or eligibility decision must:

1. Submit a written objection to the **Office of the Secretary** within **five (5) days** of the public posting of the certification notice.
2. Clearly state the grounds for objection, supported by documentation or affidavits where applicable.
3. Ensure that all filings are received within the prescribed deadline to be considered valid.

### 9.3 Resolution Timetable

Step	Responsible Authority	Timeline
Objection Submitted	Member or Candidate	Within 5 days of certification notice
Preliminary Review	Judicial Council Chair	Within 2 days of receipt
Hearing or Written Review	Judicial Council	Within 10 days of preliminary review
Final Party Ruling Issued	Judicial Council	Binding and final
Certification Action Recorded	State Chair	Within 24 hours of ruling issuance

### 9.4 Appeal Limits

- Decisions issued by the Judicial Council are final and binding within the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands.
- No further internal appeal may be made after the Council's ruling.
- Legal challenges to the public ballot or its administration, if any, may be filed only in a court of competent jurisdiction and not through ESVI.

## 10 Campaign Conduct, Ethics, and Communication Rules

### 10.1 Neutrality Obligation

All members of the **Certification Committee, Judicial Council, and Election Oversight Committee** shall maintain strict neutrality throughout the election and certification process.

- Members shall not publicly endorse, fund, or campaign for any candidate in races they administer.
- Breaches of neutrality will be reviewed by the **Judicial Council** and may result in removal or disciplinary action.

### 10.2 Use of Party Resources

The resources, platforms, and branding of the **Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands (DPVI)** shall be used only with the approval of the **Executive Committee**.

- Party logos, stationery, social media pages, or mailing lists may not be used for individual campaign promotion.
- Authorized uses must ensure equal access to all certified candidates and uphold the Party's standards of fairness and integrity.

### **10.3 Candidate Forums and Public Appearances**

DPVI-sponsored forums shall provide all certified candidates with:

1. Equal speaking time and access to the audience.
2. Neutral moderators approved by the **Election Oversight Committee**.
3. Clear guidelines to prevent personal attacks or misinformation.

Participation in such events is strongly encouraged to promote member engagement and informed voting.

### **10.4 Ethical Conduct Standards**

All candidates, officers, and committee members shall conduct themselves in a manner that:

- Reflects integrity, civility, and respect for fellow Democrats.
- Avoids the spread of misinformation or statements that undermine the legitimacy of DPVI's certification authority.
- Upholds the reputation of the Party and the democratic process in the Virgin Islands.

Violations of these standards may result in formal censure, removal from committee service, or disciplinary action under DPVI Bylaws.

### **10.5 Unified Messaging**

After certification is complete, DPVI shall issue an **Official Party Statement** to reaffirm:

1. That all Democratic candidates appearing on the ballot have been duly certified under the Party's First Amendment authority.
2. That ESVI's role in the primary process is ministerial and administrative only.
3. That all members are encouraged to support certified Democratic candidates in the spirit of Party unity and shared purpose.

## **11 Certification Process**

### **11.1 Overview**

The following outline represents the official certification process of the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands (DPVI).

### **11.2 Process Outline**

1. Candidate requests official filing packet from DPVI.
2. Candidate completes filing with DPVI and, separately, with ESVI for administrative acknowledgment.

### **Verification and Certification Phase**

3. The DPVI Certification Review Committee verifies eligibility, endorsements, and membership standing.
4. The State Chair signs and issues the Official DPVI Certified List.
5. DPVI transmits the certified list to ESVI.

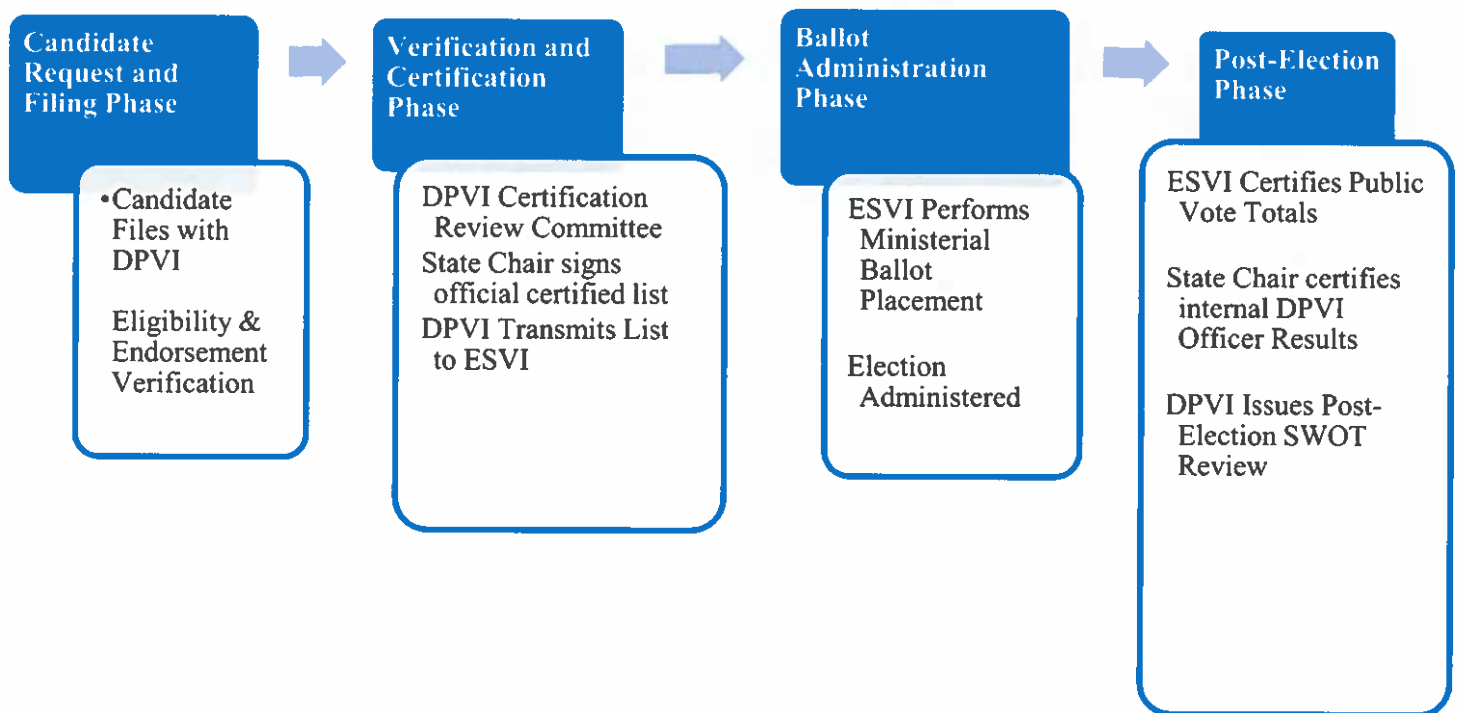
#### **Ballot Administration Phase**

6. ESVI performs the ministerial function of placing certified names on the Democratic Primary ballot.
7. Election is administered in accordance with territorial election law.

#### **Post-Election Phase**

8. ESVI certifies vote totals for public offices.
9. The DPVI State Chair certifies internal election results.
10. DPVI conducts a post-election SWOT review and issues a written report to the Territorial Committee.

### **11.3 Certification and Election Administration Flowchart**



## 12 Compliance Declaration and First Amendment Authority

### 12.1 Declaration of Legal Authority

The Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands (DPVI) affirms that its certification authority is derived from and protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, which guarantees the right to free political association.

This authority was expressly recognized and upheld in *Republican Party of the Virgin Islands v. Election System of the Virgin Islands*, Case No. 3:22-cv-0049 (Chief Judge Robert Molloy, January 10, 2024), wherein the court affirmed that:

“Certification and qualification of political party candidates constitute an internal Party function that may not be reviewed, altered, or replaced by a government agency.”

### 12.2 Limitation of ESVI Role

Under Title 18 of the Virgin Islands Code, the Election System of the Virgin Islands (ESVI) serves solely in a ministerial capacity.

- ESVI may not review, modify, or substitute the certified list provided by DPVI.
- ESVI’s responsibilities are limited to ballot administration, tabulation, and public election certification in accordance with territorial law.
- Any interference with or deviation from the certified list constitutes a violation of DPVI’s First Amendment rights and shall be subject to legal remedy.

### 12.3 Adoption and Implementation


Upon ratification by the Territorial Committee of the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands, this 2026 Primary Election and Certification Plan shall serve as the governing framework for all Party certification, election administration, and candidate eligibility processes for the 2026 election cycle.

All prior plans, procedures, or conflicting guidelines are hereby repealed and replaced upon the adoption of this Plan.

The State Chair, Secretary, and relevant committees are hereby authorized to implement and enforce this Plan in coordination with Party officers and the Election System of the Virgin Islands as appropriate under law.

ADOPTED by the Territorial Committee of the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands on this 24 day of October, 2025.

This 2026 Primary Election and Certification Plan was reviewed, voted upon, and ratified in accordance with the Bylaws of the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands and is hereby declared the official governing document for Party certification procedures during the 2026 election cycle.

  
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CAROL M. BURKE  
State Chairwoman  
Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands  
(Chief Certifying Authority of DPVI)



**Approved on October 24, 2025 – DPVI Quarterly Meeting with a majority of members**

Attested By: Chanice L. Jarvis

Secretary, Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands

Recorded By: Chanice L. Jarvis

For Official Records of the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands