



Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety

Legislature USVI

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- 0:00:00 Music Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. [3 such phrases repeated 14 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:07:30 Thank you. We'll be right back. [2 such phrases repeated 19 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:17:00 We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you.
- 0:18:30 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- 0:20:30 Thank you. I love you Thank you. We'll be right back. [3 such phrases repeated 23 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:32:30 The Committee on Homeland Security, Justice, and Public Safety is hereby called to order. Good morning to the listening and viewing audience. Good morning to my colleagues. Good morning to the central staff of the legislature and my staff. June 1st marks the beginning of hurricane season. The Virgin Islands Territorial Management Agency falls under this purview of this committee and are currently engaged in an exercise for hurricane preparedness and therefore was not available for today's hearing.
- 0:33:16 However, I want to assure the community that we understand the importance of getting by TEMA before the people to address our readiness for hurricane season. My colleague, the chair of the Committee on Disaster Recovery Infrastructures and Planning, will convey a hearing on June 38th, and VITEMA will provide an update. I want to thank my colleague in advance for this collaboration. June 1st is also Men's Health Month. I want to personally encourage all men, personally encourage all men, I'm saying all men, to conduct the preventive screening because many health problems are preventable and early detections allow treatments before it is too late.

- 0:34:18 I also want to encourage all residents to support the Relay for Life this weekend. And remember, an ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure. I want to recognize all employees of the year. The commitment and dedication to the jobs do not go unannounced or unnoticed. Congratulations to all. We have a short agenda today, and we will begin. Madam Clerk, may I have a roll call, please.
- 0:35:02 Senator Angel Bulkus, Jr. Senator Bulkus, absent. Senator Duane M. DeGraff. Senator DeGraff, absent. Senator A. Fonseca? I'm here. Senator Fonseca, present. Senator Kenneth L. Gittins? Senator Gittins, absent. Senator Franklin D. Johnson? I'm here.
- 0:35:30 Senator Johnson, present. Senator Avery L. Lewis? I'm here. Senator Lewis, present. Senator Clifford A. Joseph, Sr.? Present. Senator Joseph, present. Mr. Chair, you have four present, three absent. Thank you, Madam Clerk. Madam Clerk, is there any correspondent to be read into the record? Correspondence from Mario M. Brooks, Police Commissioner, June 3rd, 2026.
- 0:36:04 Hold on, from Senators. No, there's no correspondence from Senators. okay so you go correspondence from mario m brooks police commissioner okay we have a quorum i will begin madam clerk please read today's agenda into the record committee on homeland security justice and public safety the 36 legislatures committee on homeland security justice and public safety will meet on thursday june 4th 2026 at 12 30 p.m in the fritz Elawet Conference Room on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands to consider the following official agenda. Block 1, the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety will receive testimony on the following measures. Bill number 36-0224, an act amending Title 20, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 51, Subchapter 1, Section 801, relating to the Moving Violations Point System Act, sponsored by senator avery l lewis invited testifiers miss barbara jackson mcintosh director bureau of motor vehicles miss regina peterson esquire administrator of courts judiciary of the u.s virgin islands bill number 36-0139 an act amending title 31 virgin islands code to assess civil liability for destruction or damage to government property through willful or negligent act sponsored by senator avery l lewis invited testifiers honorable lisa alejandro commissioner vi department of property and procurement honorable gordon ray esquire vi attorney general vi department of justice that concludes the reading of the agenda mr chair thank you madam clerk um the testifiers are ready and we will begin with a mic check on st thomas
- 0:38:08 Please state your name and title for the record. Good morning. My name is Barbara Jackson McIntosh, Director for the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Thank you. St. Croix. Good afternoon. Patricia Lynn Pryor, Director of White Collar Crime and Public Corruption, standing in for Attorney General Ray today. Thank you. Madam Clerk, is there any correspondent to be read into the record?
- 0:38:46 Correspondents from Mario M. Brooks, Police Commissioner, June 3rd, 2026. The Honorable Clifford A. Joseph, Sr., Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety. Dear Chairman Joseph, I hope this letter finds you well. On behalf of the Virgin Islands Police Department, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your continued support of the Virgin Islands Police Department and your unwavering commitment to public safety throughout the Virgin Islands. I am writing to respectfully request an excused absence from the upcoming meeting of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, scheduled for Thursday, June 4, 2026 at 12.30 p.m. in the Fritz Elowets Conference Room on St. Croix. Unfortunately, the scheduled hearing directly coincides with the 3rd Annual National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, NOBLE International Summer Training Seminar, which is being hosted here in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Virgin Islands Police Department is privileged to serve as host for this prestigious event, which represents a significant gathering of law enforcement executives, policy makers, public safety professionals, professionals, and technology innovators from across the United States, the Caribbean, and the global diaspora. This year's theme, Justice Without Borders, Global Practices Protecting the Vulnerable, focuses on strengthening regional and international collaboration to address emerging public safety challenges, including transnational criminal organizations, human trafficking, cybercrime, violent crime reduction, and the protection of vulnerable populations. Given the importance of these discussions and their direct relevance to the public safety challenges facing our territory, our participation in the summit is critical to advancing initiatives that will enhance law enforcement effectiveness and public safety throughout the Virgin Islands. We have submitted invitations to
- 0:40:40 each member of the 36th legislature and I highly encourage each of you to take advantage of this unique opportunity to participate in portions of the seminar and engage with national and international subject matter experts who are focused on innovative strategies to combat transnational crime, leverage emerging technologies, and strengthen public safety partnerships. While the leadership of the department are unable to attend the hearing, and based on your request, we would like to provide a brief update regarding the current status and ongoing initiatives of the Virgin Islands Police Department. With respect to the federal consent decree, the department has achieved substantial compliance across all of the required areas. This milestone reflects years of dedicated effort by our officers, civilian personnel, supervisors, and executive leadership to strengthen accountability, professionalism, policy development, training, and constitutional

policing practices. Although work remains, we're highly encouraged and motivated by the progress made and remain committed to sustaining these improvements throughout this monitoring period and finally achieving full compliance. Operationally, the department has continued to refine its enforcement and investigative strategies through intelligence-led and data-driven policing. Our focus remains on reducing violent crime, combating illegal firearms trafficking, disrupting narcotics operations, identifying repeat offenders, and addressing organized criminal activity. We have also expanded our use of technology and analytical tools to improve operational effectiveness and investigative outcomes. Like many law enforcement agencies throughout the nation, the Virgin Islands Police Department has experienced staffing challenges resulting from retirements, resignations, and other personnel losses. These reductions have impacted patrol operations and staffing levels across the territory. In response, the department has adjusted patrol schedules, strategically redeployed resources and incorporated technology as a force multiplier. Through enhanced surveillance capabilities, drone operations, automated license plate readers, and data-driven deployment strategies, we have been able to mitigate staffing shortages while maintaining critical public safety services. Significant progress has also been achieved through the Territory Wide Camera Initiative. Phases one and two of the project have been completed, resulting in expanded surveillance coverage throughout strategic locations across the Virgin Islands. Additionally, the Department continues to evaluate the effectiveness of the FLOC safety

0:43:20 camera system through an ongoing pilot program. Early results have demonstrated promising investigative value, particularly in identifying suspect vehicles, supporting criminal investigations, and enhancing situational awareness for responding officers. We have recently launched our real-time intelligence centers in both districts. They will serve as the hub for all our technological intelligence and investigative support going forward. The Department also continues to implement proactive public safety initiatives designed to improve roadway safety and deter criminal activity. One such effort is the National Click It or Ticket Campaign, which focuses on seat belt compliance and traffic safety enforcement. While primarily aimed at reducing traffic fatalities and injuries, these enforcement activities frequently result in the identification of other moving violations, impaired driving offenses, illegal firearms possession, outstanding warrants, and additional criminal activity. As a result, traffic enforcement remains an important component of our broader public safety and crime reduction strategy. The Virgin Islands Police Department remains steadfast in its commitment to enhancing public safety, strengthening community trust, and delivering professional, accountable, and effective law enforcement services to the residents and visitors of the Virgin Islands.

0:44:40 Thank you for your consideration and understanding regarding this scheduling conflict. I look forward to continuing our productive partnership with the Legislature and engaging in future discussions concerning the safety and security of our territory. Respectfully, Mario M. Brooks, Police Commissioner. Thank you. At this time, I'll recognize Senator Johnson for your point of privilege. Good afternoon. Good afternoon, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon to my colleagues. Good afternoon to the viewer and listening audience. It's always an honor to, you know, have these young students on a summer program and give them an opportunity. And it's important that we allow them to be introduced to the world because these are our future here. So I have a young lady here, Ms. Pickering. She's ready to go, ready to tell you a little bit about herself and her future ambition. Good day, everyone.

0:45:31 My name is Trinity Pickering. I am a rising sophomore at the one and only Barra Nation. I am interested in cheerleading as I have just made the cheer team. My future career goals are to major in nursing and to become a neonatal nurse. I am honored to be working in office alongside Senator Franklin Johnson. and it's a pleasure to be here. Thank you. Thank you. All right.

0:46:00 And she said, Mr. O'Donnell, yesterday a senator was asking a little question and he asked her, are you on a roll? And she let them to know the principal on a roll. Right? Am I correct? That's right. So she's doing well, but she's a little shy, but she'll get there. It's a pleasure having you aboard with us and look for big things from you in the future. All right? Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Pickering. At this time, the committee will accept the testimony on bill number 360224. So Ms. McIntosh, Director McIntosh. Thank you.

0:46:53 Good afternoon, Senator Clifford Joseph, Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice, and Public Safety. Senator Joseph. I think it is of the privilege to introduce the bill. sorry sorry sorry sorry sorry i'll have the bill sponsor introduce the bill and then we'll take the testimony from both bills you could go ahead and um introduce your both bills and then we'll have the mr mcintosh so you recognize and that's for the record senator the graph is in and we have commissioner alejandro assistant commissioner vincent richards and attorney miss morancy attorney morontes i think that must as well as it pertains to hold on hold on um give me a second senator lewis at this time could you recognize the senators that are present um senator de graaf okay continue senator lewis Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman and colleagues, Bill No. 36-0224 is a practical, common-sense measure that strengthens an existing law already on the books. Let me say that one more time.

- 0:48:32 We're reinventing the wheel. It's an existing law that's already on the books. The Virgin Islands already has a moving violation point system. Drivers already accumulate points for violation. This is not a new program, not a new penalty system, and not a new burden on drivers. The point system, Bill No. 360224, simply modernizes it, makes it more efficient, fairer, and more focused on public safety. Drivers already face license suspension when they reach certain thresholds. What this bill does is improve the administration of that system, increase accountability, and create additional incentives for safer driving. First, the bill transfers the authority to suspend licenses for the excessive point accumulation from the Superior Court to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. This is not a removal of due process. In fact, due process remains fully protected because every driver is entitled to a hearing, and any decision by the BMV remains reviewable by the Superior Court. What this change does accomplish is reduce unnecessary court involvement in what is fundamentally an administrative matter.
- 0:50:00 Our court should be focused on criminal cases, civil disputes, and other judicial matters, not routine administrative suspension that can be handled by the agency responsible for licensing drivers. Second, the bill creates a fairer point reduction system. Instead of using a calendar year, points are reduced based on a consecutive 12-month period of safe driving. A driver who demonstrates responsible behavior and avoids violations for an entire year will receive a reduction in points.
- 0:50:34 That rewards good conduct and encourages long-term compliance with traffic laws. Third, the bill strengthens driver education. A person may voluntarily complete a driver's improvement course and earn a reduction in points, provided the points were not accumulated because of an accident. This creates an opportunity for education and rehabilitation rather than simply punishment. Fourth, the bill updates penalties that have remained largely unchanged for decades. A \$25 fine no longer serves as an effective deterrent.
- 0:51:15 Unfortunately, some drivers view such minimal penalties as merely the cost of doing business. Increasing the fine to \$200 reinforces the seriousness of traffic violations and encourages greater compliance with the law. And this is commensurate to throughout many other states as well. So I did that research on that. Most importantly, this bill is about public safety. According to the testimony from the Bureau of Motor Vehicles that we will hear in shortly, Thousands of moving violations citations are filed annually in the Virgin Islands. Despite public awareness campaigns and enforcement efforts, dangerous driving behaviours continue to place motorists, pedestrians and families at risk. I submitted some data here today, and let's ask media to put it up one quick second so I can outline a few things here. About some of the different citations, should have been a little harder, some of the different citations that this data came from Highway Safety in conjunction with the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands. Between FY 23, fiscal year 23 and up to now, we have had a total of 4,518 citations for negligent driving. For passing a red light alone, we have 1,067. A failure to maintain control of a vehicle, we have 608. Improper turns, 435.
- 0:52:56 Obstructing traffic, 408. And these citations increase year in, year after. So I could go down the list, passing a double yellow line, 172, traveling the wrong way on a one-way street, 133. All of these are different infractions that we're discussing here today. Every reckless driver who remains on the road because of administrative delays increased the possibility of a crash, an injury or tragedy that could have been prevented.
- 0:53:35 This legislation promotes accountability, encourages driver education, rewards safe driving habits, reduces unnecessary burdens on the courts, and provides the Bureau of Motor Vehicles the tools necessary to act efficiently while preserving the rights of every motorist. This is a balanced bill, it is fair, and most importantly, it is a public safety bill. Colleagues, I respectfully ask for your favourable consideration and support of Bill 36.0224.
- 0:54:13 Mr Chairman, you would like me to proceed with the next bill as well? Yes, Senator. Good. Colleagues, again, I rise in support of Bill No. 36-0139. At its core, this bill is about one simple principle. If you damage public property through negligence and willful misconduct, you should be held accountable. Every government vehicle, every fence, every light pole, every piece of equipment, every facility, and every structure owned by the government of the Virgin Islands, belongs to the people of this territory. These are not private assets.
- 0:55:00 They are public assets purchased and maintained, maintained with taxpayers' dollars. Unfortunately, unfortunately, we continue to see instances where government property is damaged, abused, neglected, vandalized, or destroyed, and yet very little accountability follows. When a government vehicle is wrecked because of negligence, and again I say negligence, taxpayers pay. When government equipment is damaged, taxpayers pay.
- 0:55:32 When fencing is destroyed, streetlights are knocked down, or public facilities are damaged, taxpayers pay. When government assets are unavailable because they are awaiting repairs, the public loses services. The community suffers. The Department of Property and Procurement has stated that certain mechanisms already exist in law. I appreciate the response and acknowledge their position. However, if those mechanisms are sufficient, then we must ask. Then one must

ask. At times we ask, why do we continue to see government vehicles damaged and left unrepair?

- 0:56:18 Why do taxpayers continue to observe these losses? The issue before us is not whether some authority exists somewhere within policy, contracts, or administrative procedures. The issue is whether accountability is occurring consistently from what the public sees. The answer is often no. The bill sends a clear message. Government property is not disposable. Government property is not free. Government property is not exempt from accountability.
- 0:56:52 Whether the damage is caused by a government employee, a contractor, a leasee or a private citizen, there should be a clear statutory expectation that the responsible party bears the responsibility for the loss. This is not about punishment. This is about stewardship. It is about protecting public investment. It is about preserving limited government resources. And it is about ensuring that funds intended for public services are not continually diverted to repair preventable damage. Every dollar spent replacing damaged government property is a dollar that cannot be spent on roads, schools, health care, public safety, housing or critical services. The people of the Virgin Ella expects us to be responsible custodians of their resources. Bill No. 3600139 strengthens that expectation by placing accountability where it belongs, with the individual responsible for the damage.
- 0:57:57 I believe the legislation promotes fiscal responsibility, protects taxpayer investments, encourages greater care of public assets, and reinforces the principle that the public property deserves the same respect as a private property. For those reasons, I respectfully ask for your support of Bill No. 360139. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Senator Lewis.
- 0:58:23 Thank you, Senator Lewis. Madam Chair, is there any correspondence to be read on the record for Bill No. 360224? May 22nd, 2026, the Honourable Clifford A. Joseph, Chairperson, Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety. Request for testimony on Bill 36-0224. Thank you for the invitation to testify on behalf of the Judicial Branch on the proposed Bill No. 36-0224, seeking to amend Title 20 of the Virgin Islands Code relating to the Moving Violations Point System. I respectfully request to be excused from testifying on this measure and instead ask that this letter be placed on the record in lieu of testimony. The Judiciary takes no position on the amendment, which would place full administration of the movement violations point system under the purview of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles.
- 0:59:27 Agency reviews slash appeals will be conducted as required by law. Sincerely, Regina Peterson, Administrator of Courts. Thank you, Madam Clerk. uh me there could you recognize the mic of director mackintosh and director mackintosh you could go ahead with your testimony on bill number 360224 thank you good afternoon senator clifford joseph chairman of the committee on homeland security justice and public safety of and other senators of the 36th legislature present members of the committee the viewing and listening audience my name is barbara jackson mcintosh director of the bureau of motor vehicles thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to provide testimony in support of bill number 36-0224 which amends title 20 of the virgin Islands Code relating to the move-in violations point system. Currently, when a driver repeatedly violates the traffic laws and accumulates excessive points, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles cannot efficiently suspend that license. Instead, the BMV must petition the Superior Court through the Attorney General's Office and wait for judicial action before enforcement can occur. That process creates delays, burdens the court system, consumes government resources and allows dangerous drivers to remain on the road longer than they should.
- 1:01:14 Bill 36-0224 corrects that problem. This measure modernizes the administrative process while still preserving due process protections. Drivers still have rights, but the government also has a responsibility to act quickly when public safety is at risk. Administrative license suspension systems are being used successfully in jurisdictions throughout the country because they are more efficient, more practical, and more responsive to public safety concerns. The Bureau of Motor Vehicles has completed the framework by which the process will be administered. Drivers will be notified telephonically, electronically and in writing when they have accumulated nine points. They will also be advised of their options for reducing points before suspension. Bearing in mind, everyone starts from zero points when we go live. We have begun the education campaign, which will continue before the system goes live and thereafter. We recognize that there will be a learning curve and have put the systems and personnel in place to assist our residents through the process. This bill also improves fairness in the point system itself. Under the current law, points are deducted or credited based on the calendar year instead of an actual 12-month period. That approach creates inconsistency and unequal treatment. A driver should not receive an advantage or disadvantage simply because of what month a violation occurred. A rolling 12-month standard is more accurate, more equitable, and better reflects actual driving behavior. For example, if you are assigned points in December, three points are automatically deducted in January based on the current system. The financial penalties also need to be updated. These adjustments ensure penalties are meaningful and reinforce the seriousness of traffic violations. In fiscal year 2023, the number of citations that were filed with the Superior Court was approximately 7,149. In fiscal year 2024, the number increased to 8,510. And in fiscal year 2025, there were approximately 8,402 citations filed for moving violations alone. As of April 30, 2026, the number of citations that were

filed with the Supreme Court for fiscal year 2026 is approximately 4,675. This data has shown that despite the best efforts of law enforcement and the educational efforts of the Office of Highway Safety, there is still a blatant disregard for roadway safety, traffic laws, other motorists and pedestrians. A \$25 fine may have made sense decades ago, but today it does not serve as a meaningful deterrent. Unfortunately, when penalties are too low, some drivers simply view them as a minor inconvenience rather than a consequence. Increasing the fine to \$200 reinforces the seriousness of traffic violations and encourages compliance with our laws. Likewise, increasing the driver improvement program fee from \$75 to \$100 is both reasonable and necessary. These programs are designed to educate drivers, reduce repeat violations, and improve roadway safety. The modest increase helps sustain

1:05:16 and strengthen those programs while remaining accessible we must remember what is truly at stake here every reckless driver every habitual violator and every delayed enforcement action increase the risk of crashes injuries and fatalities on our roadway this legislation is not about punishment for punishment's sake. It is about prevention. It ensures that habitual violators are addressed promptly and efficiently. It encourages drivers to adopt long-term safe driving habits. It reduces administrative burdens on the courts. It aligns penalties with today's economic and enforcement realities. Most importantly, it is about creating consequences that encourage safer behavior before strategy occurs. Bill 36-0224 strengthens accountability, improves efficiency, promotes fairness, and prioritizes public safety. It strikes the balance between enforcement, fairness, and education while modernizing an outdated system. For those reasons, the BMV supports Bill 36-0224. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

1:06:51 Thank you for your testimony. Can you recognize the mic of Commissioner Alejandro, please? For your testimony on Bill number 36-01-39. Good morning. Commissioner Lisa Alejandro. May I proceed, Senator? Yeah, you can proceed.

1:07:21 Thank you. Good afternoon, Honorable Clifford A. Joseph, Senior, Chair of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety. to the members and non-members of the committee, to the bill's sponsor, the Honorable Avery L. Lewis, follow testifiers, legislative staff, and the viewing and listening audience. I am Lisa Maria Alejandro, Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement. Appearing with me today are Vincent Richards, Assistant Commissioner, and Magdalene A. Morancy Esquire, the Chief Legal Counsel. We appear today pursuant to your invitation to provide testimony on Bill No. 36-0139, an act amending Title 31 of the Virgin Islands Code to assess civil liability for destruction or damage to government property through willful or negligent acts. From our review of the bill, DPP recognizes its intent, which appears to provide a mechanism for accountability, protection of the government's assets, lifecycle extension, and the maximization of government resources. As the executive branch agency with the primary responsibility for managing and safeguarding the government's varying types of property, we support the objective of protecting government assets and ensuring accountability notwithstanding the foregoing as will be further outlined below existing statutes and established processes already address these objectives accordingly the department does not believe the additional statutory authority is warranted given its duplicative nature the bill proposes to add section 169a to title 31 of the virgin islands code

1:09:34 providing that any person found negligent in the operation of a government vehicle or who willfully or negligently damages a government vehicle or causes it to be damaged will be civilly liable for the cost of the repair or replacement of the vehicle The Department understands that this is intended to serve as a means of establishing accountability and securing the repair and replacement of the government's property. However, the Department must note, this is already expressly established in Title 31, Section 167B of the Virgin Islands Code, which provides as follows. Officials or employees of the government shall be financially responsible for any physical damage occurring to a government motor vehicle as a proximate result of negligence concerning the same.

1:10:34 Therefore, as currently written, 31 of the Virgin Islands Code, subsection 167B, already makes government employees financially responsible, including withholding wages for the damage of the government's vehicles caused by the employees' negligence. As a result, DPP believes that the addition of the proposed Section 169 is unnecessary as it is duplicative of an already existing statutory provision. The requirements surrounding an employee's financial responsibility for any damage that the employee causes to a government vehicle in 31 VIEC subsection 167B are regularly communicated in memorandums issued by the department and are covered in the pending vehicle operator and use policies and procedures. Moreover, although the Department recognizes that the proposed Section 169A seeks to expand liability beyond government employees, the Department posits that this authority already exists. Currently, the government can seek recovery from non-employees responsible for damaging government vehicles through civil litigation or insurance claims.

1:12:04 In cases of vehicular accidents involving government vehicles in which the private driver is at fault, long-established procedures are in place to settle claims with the driver and their insurer. As such, the proposed addition is duplicative. The bill also seeks to add a proposed Section 205A to make individuals financially responsible for damage to government

property, including fencing, lighting, non-permanent structures, and government real property caused by his or her negligence or willful or wanton behavior. Additionally, the bill affords the liable person the opportunity to negotiate a reasonable amount to cover the cost of damages with his or her insurance company, where this person has insurance.

1:13:03 While the Department understands and appreciates the intent of the proposed measure, the addition does not appear to create any rights that does not already exist, and it also does not change the application of any existing statutory provisions and policies. First, the proposed Section 205A is not required to enable the government to pursue civil action against a person who has damaged government property, including fencing, lighting, and non-permanent structures, because the government can already pursue those actions through civil litigation. Additionally, contractual mechanisms are also utilized to protect government property.

1:13:52 For example, all leases of government property, including business and commercial leases and agriculture leases, both of which require legislative approval, contain several conditions to protect government property. These mechanisms include terms and conditions such as the leases are held responsible for repair and maintenance of the government's property. Secondly, waste is prohibited.

1:14:21 The properties are also to be returned to the government in as good condition as it was since last repair, less reasonable wear and tear. And fourth, all leases are required to carry commercial general liability insurance with established minimum policy limits. Moreover, pursuant to the terms of the leases, if the leasees fail or refuse or neglect to make any repair for which it is responsible, or if repair is needed because of the leasee's negligent acts or omissions, then the government may make such repairs and then bill the cost of such repairs plus the interest at the rate provided for in the leases to the leasees. In conclusion, Mr. Chair, while we understand the bill's intent to provide accountability and to establish means to repair and protect government property, property, and we certainly applaud its intent. The proposed changes do not provide additional remedies to the government or affect the government's current processes for utilizing the existing remedies. Since 31 VIC subsection 167B regarding financial responsibility for damage to government vehicles and other mechanisms already exist through general tort law provisions as avenues for the repair and protection of government property. The Department does not view this measure as necessary. Accordingly, we respectfully do not recommend its approval, as we believe the intent of the bill can be achieved through inter-agency coordination and departmental

1:16:19 and stakeholder operations under the existing framework we thank you again for the invitation for the opportunity to be a part of today's discussion and we welcome the opportunity to engage in further conversations regarding the application of existing remedies and the maximization of resources within the established framework this framework which has already exists to support the intent of this bill. Mr. Chair this concludes my prepared testimony and we remain available to answer any questions the committee may have. I also request your indulgence Mr. Chair to just honor our employees of the year today that's also celebrated was celebrated by the government um miss sharon jennings and mr trevor charles in my st croix office congratulations to them thank you sir thank you for your comprehensive testimony and congratulations again to your employees as well um at this time the chair will recognize attorney prior on bill number 36 0139.

1:17:35 Thank you. Good afternoon. Chairman Clifford Joseph, Committee on Homeland Security, Justice, and Public Safety members, Bill Sponsor Avery Lewis, other senators, legislative staff, fellow testifiers, and the viewing and listening audiences. I'm Patricia Lynn Pryor, the Director of White Collar Crime and Public Corruption Unit for Virgin Islands Department of Justice and it's my honor and privilege to appear before you today. The Attorney General sends his apologies for not being able to make it today. The Department of Justice appreciates the opportunity to review and provide comments on bill number 36-0139. Although the stated purpose of bill number 36-0139 is to amend Title 31 of the Virgin Islands Code, Chapters 20 and 21, to assess civil liability for the destruction or damage to government property through willful or negligent acts. The Department of Justice believes that this measure is duplicative and therefore unnecessary. The Virgin Islands Code already allows for causes of action and remedies for both negligent and intentional destruction of government property, including the enforcement of internal departmental policies and procedures and the filing of civil actions if needed.

1:19:02 For example, the penalties and financial responsibility for misconduct and physical damage to any of the government's motor vehicles are currently codified in Title 31 of the Code, Chapter 20, Section 167. Additionally, civil actions are another available remedy to recover damages for damage to or destruction of government property. Civil actions for damage to or destruction of real or personal property are governed under Title V of the Virgin Islands Code. Finally, departments and agencies within the government of the Virgin Islands should have formal policies regarding the use and misuse of government property, including vehicles. By allowing each department and agency the autonomy to resolve these matters in-house, claims can be resolved quicker and more efficiently, which can result in reduced costs. Matters that cannot be resolved internally should be escalated through the remaining available avenues. Although Bill 36-0139

addresses a very legitimate concern, we believe it is not necessary. Duplicative laws should be avoided as they are an inefficient use of resources that can lead to significant problems, including inconsistency in the law and as a result, arbitrary enforcement. I thank the committee for allowing the Department of Justice to testify on Bill 36-0139.

1:20:38 This concludes my formal remarks. I welcome any questions you may have, and I would be remiss if I didn't recognize our employees of the year as well. Giselle Quinones here on St. Croix and Staniqua Mason, who's being honored in St. Thomas today. Well, congratulations again to the employees of justice that made the Employee of the Year this year. And thank you for your testimony. At this time, the chair recognized Senator Avery Lewis for your point. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I thank Director McIntosh, Commissioner Alejandro, and Ms. Pryor for your testimony. Thank you.

1:21:19 Commissioner Alejandro, since property procurement is a custodian of all government properties, am I correct? Do you recognize the microphone of Senator? Commissioner Alejandro. Yes, Senator. Thank you. Currently, at this time, does the government have an overall, I don't want to use the word universal, but a standard policy or form of policy regarding the misuse of government property, including vehicles or damages to properties? do we have a standard operating policy in place?

1:22:01 Not police have one, agriculture have one, do we have a standard one that everyone knows this is the one we follow when we have a damage to vehicle or damage to government property or anything. Do we have those policies currently in place? Great question, Senator. Thank you. Commissioner Alejandro, great question. So the government, since these laws were placed on the record in 1987 did not have a policy but because of the need and of course the need shared with this body and the your proposing of this bill prior to that about a year or two ago the department began working on policies which we are now presently going to release they are before the office of collective bargaining and with the union being reviewed all right i'll come back later so we could delve in a little more in it so maybe you give some more details about it but thank you for that question and the answer the response thank you well colleagues we will be going into a four minute round of questioning um um i will start off with senator franklin johnson good afternoon thank you very much again mr chair um you know i i sometimes get a little disappointing when we don't have representatives from the agency then that are needed to be here a lot of my question would have been posed to the police department to find out what status we are with these cameras in the traffic lights. Because we saw that red light violation was 1,067. And I could assure you, if I haven't count at least 50 or 60 of them on my own, I ain't count none. And that's why it's so important when we put these laws and measures in place to hear from the agency who are responsible for having these cameras up and trying to find out the status of all these cameras because we could put all the laws that we want and make them

1:24:18 and pass them. Very good piece of measure here. But if there's no enforcement to them then it's for null. But my one question I wanted to ask Commissioner McIntosh since she's here. What's the conversation like with the insurance company then in regards to the point system? Director McIntosh. So the conversation is active. And because we don't do active point system enforcement, the law allows for a decrease in fee in the amount of money you pay for insurance or some credit, as it were for good behavior, but that doesn't happen. Everybody's charges same across the board because there is no system in place and and that's why i asked this question because having this point system is a plus but we should be able to also give the good drivers and true conversation with insurance credit too so that at least the the their policies should be going down versus into one standard in other words a violator get points his insurance doesn't go higher well it should right do you know if it does for those that are because a lot of times when you go to a register or to get your insurance they ask you question about traffic violation and certain things so do they make a difference in increases on the prices for those who have violation if you are aware of it yes it will senator that's part of the conversation but no one charge no one gets charged more than the other person if you're a violator but with the system in place that is their plan to ensure that that um people who are good drivers per se that they get rewarded and those who are not that they get um punished but as we speak right now

1:26:15 you're not aware if a good driver like me are getting so it should be getting benefits right i am aware that you're not getting any benefits that's why i'm aware of too i pay the same price every year in fact sometimes it goes up and i think the last ticket i got i was mostly about 19 20 years that's a a long time ago um but i i do support this first measure and i i listen to both testimonies and bill number 36 0139 and and that's something we could have some conversation And I definitely think that we need to make sure that the point system works in the way it should. And some more deep diving and having conversation with the insurance company needs to be had to make sure that the folks who are doing right get credit for it too.

1:27:03 Yes, definitely those who are in violation, those points and those penalties need to be in place. They got to go drive in school, that's what they got to do, fine. But those who are driving on the road year in, year out, without citations, should also get some kind of benefit. At the appropriate time, I'll put my position in voting on these both measures at the

appropriate time. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

- 1:27:33 The Chair will now recognize Senator Ray Fonseca for his four minutes. Yes, thank you, and a pleasant good afternoon to my colleagues, the distinguished panel of testifiers, and also the viewing and listening audience. Okay, so I want to first take this quick time real quick to congratulate Nurse Sally Brown. 74 years of dedicated service to the people of the Virgin Islands in nursing. Even though she's a young 94 or so, she still is contributing and working in the St. John community. So, Nurse Sally Brown, we appreciate you.
- 1:28:32 And also, the nurses, there were several of them. who don't want to mention the name at my hearing next week we'll go into detail real quick um bill number 36 0244 um zero two that's right two four zero two two four um director mackintosh so i want to ask you a question so the bill transfers the authority to suspend a driver's license from the court to the director of the bureau of motor vehicle And I believe in my interpretation, at the same time, the director would also preside over hearings involving suspensions and penalties. So this concentrates the investigative, the enforcement, and the adjudicative authority in a single office. And so it raises some due process concerns. Now, I do support the bill, but I want to ask you, is there going to be an hearing officer or administrative judge to ensure the fairness in this process?
- 1:29:42 How do you see that unfolding? Director McIntosh, bear in mind that the adjudication comes from the court. So we are not involved in the original process. We are only enforcing what is sent to us from the court. So once we receive the notification from the court that the person has been found guilty, and the court decides, well, on there, we currently get the reports, right? So the court will decide it's 3 points, 4 points, 5 points based on the law, and that's what we apply. So once the person reaches 12 points and the license is suspended, if there is a question as to the validity of the points or the records, the person will have a right to see the record that came from the court.
- 1:30:36 And if they're still... Excuse me for interrupting because I only got a... I want to get to the other bill. But my understanding is that the authority will now be transferred to the director of motor vehicle, right? Correct. Good. So that's what I'm talking about. So the director of motor vehicle will now have the investigative, enforcement, and adjudicative rights. So what is your process? Are you going to have an administrative judge or hearing officer to ensure fairness to the process? Because now you're the judge, jury, and everybody, and the enforcer.
- 1:31:12 So what I was taking exception to was the adjudication part. That's what I was explaining. when you say adjudication that we are the one who are deciding that the person is guilty and that's not correct so we're going to have a hearing officer but you you're gonna you're gonna now be authorized to do the suspension of the driver's license based on the recommendation of the court yes so good so then based on the fact that you're doing the suspension you're the one that doing the enforcement correct so we'll have a quick question i'm sorry for interrupting you but i want to get to some stuffy okay so the procedures now um regarding the timelines the burden of proof or whether penalties and can be stayed while an appeal is pending who will now handle that once if once if the person is not satisfied with the outcome they still have their right and the law also still allows that to go to court for an appeal we can go to court after we have um determined that they're they're um that the law i mean the points has to be sustained we'll have a hearing officer if the hearing officer sustains based on the record and they're still dissatisfied you can then take the matter to court um senator was called so you could try and wrap it up okay yes thank you um i want to go quick to bill number 360139 um there's some concerns i have um the bill and commissioner alejandro um you correct me if i'm wrong my interpretation is the bill imposes civil liability on any person found net negligent in damaging the government property of vehicles but it does not define the standard for determined negligence or establish who makes the determination and um is that the way you
- 1:33:03 interpret that the bill as well you know in other words the civil liability on the person found negligent in damaging the property of vehicles but it doesn't define the standard is is is the standard anywhere in the bill because i'm looking at an amendment on defining the standard of um whether the negligence is involved and also the liability um is another issue um because thank you thank you senator you you could answer she could answer the question but you can't ask the next question okay thank you mr jay lisa alejandro commissioner department of property and procurement So if I'm understanding your question, Senator, basically overall, all of what was proposed in the bill is already duplicate to what exists in the law. Notwithstanding, the government has the right to pursue any civil litigation cases for negligence, And the courts make the determination on whether or not it is willful negligence, etc. So that right still rests with the government of the Virgin Islands to pursue.
- 1:34:28 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And of course, thank you for the extra time, Mr. Chair. I didn't want to violate my extra time. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you. Thank you, Senator. The Chair now recognizes Senator Avery for your point of information. Thank you. Director McIntosh, I'd like for you to explain, leading up to any suspension, what's the formalities that's going to happen leading up to any suspension? suspension before any action is taken the court notifies dmv hey everyone has three points here four points here whatever it reaches to this point what's a warning threshold what happens okay so we have already designed what we call our director mcintosh bureau of motor vehicles so we have

designed what we call a six nine and twelve point letter so at six points we're going to send your warning telling you look you have six points and these are your options right you can go to a driving school driver improvement class and have your points deducted or have no points deducted but you wait it out after the 12-month period the law allows for three points to automatically be deducted and so at nine points we will do the same thing and at 12 points we'll let you know that okay you haven't done what you were supposed to do so now that you're suspended so that's the that's the process now we have the ability to send out these letters electronically if you have an email address we have a telephonic system where we blast like a text to everyone letting them know and we also have um mail we drop a letter in the mail so that's that's the process Yes.

1:36:18 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator DeGraff, you're recognized for your four minutes. Thank you, thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon colleagues, good afternoon testifiers. All of you listening are present. 36 0139 I to concur is duplicated so I won't even waste more time on that one so and for 24 24 36 0 2 2 4 section 1 a subsection a is amended in a third sentence by striking upon petition to the court by the director and inserting director of and it would be director of your motor vehicles right so it removes the court from the process so then it sounds to me that if someone gets a ticket then you determine the point system director McIntosh no senator if So before that, before this section, it speaks to after the case is adjudicated by the court. Right. Right. So no, this is just saying that instead of petitioning to suspend, that the beer promote the vehicle can't suspend.

1:37:54 Okay, because it doesn't seem, because like I say, it's based on A, you're striking upon the petition to the court. by the director. So we're removing the part where you, the director, is petitioning the court to find out regarding this person, I guess, stature, what their position is. So then we're eliminating that. So it's now the director of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, when we fill it in, is who it is, my understanding, is making that decision. That's what he said. You're striking it. Yes, Senator. Yes.

1:38:40 No, so that was it. So based on Section 1, Subsection A, is amending the third section by striking upon petition to the court by the director. Upon petition to the court is what happens now. Yes, Senator. That's what's happened now. Correct. We are striking that process. Yes, Senator. And then the director is the entity, the person of the Motor Vehicle Bureau, who determines what? Who determines based on the court's previous decisions, once the person achieves 12 points to suspend.

1:39:17 Right. But then you have now your 6, 9, and 12 letter issue. That's from you or that's from the court? The director of Motor Vehicle. So in the process that we are currently developing, just to give the person a fair chance to let them know that the court has said that you have accumulated six points, we'll write you a letter. Once you have accumulated another nine, we'll write you a letter again to let you know the court has found you guilty based on, you know, when you went to court. So just to keep you abreast of what you would have already known because you would have gone to court. so so then we won't need to build we won't need to build is what i'm saying because now like i say you don't have to petition the court anymore right based on this amendment no once we eliminate you petitioning the court then the question i have is then who is who finds the person legion i get a ticket for on the top of the list uh making a illegal right turn or running through us I'm saying the ticket process goes to the court correct so I Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you.

1:51:47 The Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety is back on the record after the power outage. Senator DeGraff, you could continue with your line of questioning. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will check in to see my time, four minutes, just in case.

1:52:19 Okay, so I think the director cleared it up for me because I was looking at Section 1A, where he said in terms of striking upon the petition of the court by the director and putting in the director's name. But I got how we understand how the situation is now, and I'm clear. Thank you for the time, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Senator. I have a question, Director McIntosh. The question I have is I'd like for you to clarify on the record. Currently, to suspend a license, you make a petition to the court. If this bill passes, the petition to suspend will now go to the BNB.

1:53:03 And the appeals will still follow up to the court. is that is this is that's your understanding or director mcintosh uh yes senator that's my understanding okay good thank you for your response and um also since we have attorney prayer here and uh she works in it she she attends a lot of traffic court i'll let her enlighten us on some of the action of the uh traffic court good afternoon again thank you i'm patricia lynn prior in this role i'm assistant attorney general for the department of justice here in the virgin islands and i i believe senator graff indicated that he learned more about the process during the power outage but i just wanted to clarify that we have traffic court in the superior court well, in the Magistrate Division, every week. And every week we have a number of citations that are brought before the court.

- 1:54:07 If the officers aren't there, most of the time in those cases, those tickets are dismissed. If they aren't and the case moves forward with the ticket, the person has the right to challenge it or not, and that decision on whether they are, I guess, determined guilty or not guilty of the violation, is made there in the court by the magistrate judge. So the magistrate judge does do the adjudication with regard to whether the person is liable for the fines associated with the violation. However, there's no discussion really of points going on right now in the court system. So I think this bill, what I understand it to be, is to address that and to allow, once that adjudication is made by the court, than for the director to be able to impose the or apply the points that are necessary and impose the suspensions when they are warranted as well. Thank you.
- 1:55:08 Thank you for that explanation. One more question I have for Director McIntosh. Do you think drivers need an opportunity to reduce the points by maybe taking a driver's safety course? Director McIntosh, are you referring to those who are offenders or all drivers? No, those who points are against them, whoever have offended. Yeah, they're offenders, yeah.
- 1:55:40 Correct. Yes, yes, Senator. Yes, I do believe so. Okay, thank you for your response. At this time, Senator, do I hear point of information? Yes, Mr. Chair, point of information. Senator Fonseca, you recognize your point of information. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Director McIntosh, I just want you to put on the record the driver's education course fee goes from \$25 to \$200, which is about 800% more. And, you know, some of our residents are low income and et cetera, et cetera. So will there be consideration for hardship? waiver and a payment plan or give me the justification why you support going from \$25 to \$200?
- 1:56:31 Director McIntosh, it actually goes from \$75 to \$100. The \$200 is actually the fine that you pay to the court, but for the improvement program, it's from \$70 and may have \$25 increase, \$75 to \$100, and I do support that. Okay, thank you. Thank you, Senator Fransick. At this time, I'll recognize the bill's sponsor. Senator Lewis, you're recognized for your four minutes.
- 1:57:00 As it pertains to Bill 36.0139, I'd like to thank Commissioner Alejandro and her team for coming in today, for having this discussion. But before we take any action, I'd just like to have a little, this brief discussion with Commissioner Alejandro because we had a lengthy discussion, her and the Chief Legal Counsel, and I'd just like to put on the record that, and correct me if I'm wrong, Commissioner Alejandro, currently we really didn't have a working procedural policy in place so people could do proper reporting. There's things happening whether in the day or in the night. Property and procurement don't get the information relatively in need to make the proper uh claims to restore or replace uh government property um each agency was doing something maybe a little bit different now that they beside this bill work has already begun to have an established procedure in place could you expound what that policy would look like or is it one blanket policy or we have different policies for different things Lisa Alejandro commissioner department of property and procurement yes uh senator um thank you so much for the opportunity to speak a little bit on the proposed uh policies and um procedures that the department has been working on for some time and I want to say that We did not just begin the process. Recently, this has been going on for a few years. We have as well worked with my colleague here, BMV Director McIntosh, also who has invited the Department of Property and Procurement, now my transportation team, that also has insight into their system for licensing vehicles. That was a part of the greater plan as we roll out our proposed incidental policy. So there's a policy that covers incidentals for accidents. It provides that as well. We've also drafted the SOPPs, the standard operating procedures for all agencies, and all of the maintenance those that work within the various agencies to maintain government vehicles. We've also proposed the vehicle operation policy and procedures which covers how users are to operate government vehicles of course in accordance to the already existing highway safety laws and in addition to that we have the responsibility for maintaining government vehicles the responsibility for reporting accidents so these things did not exist prior but we have been working in several documents we've also updated um the reporting mechanism to support that as well so there's check sheets there's logs there's incident reports um and and a various a caveat of documentation as well
- 2:00:22 as information to support each agency in the reporting good so it's fair to say that um currently right now as we speak the reporting the reporting process um hasn't been really a hundred percent because so the department wasn't able to file claims and go after certain things civilly like what we're discussing here today but moving forward henceforth based on your new policy and procedure we'll be able to be more effective on it absolutely thank you senator absolutely um and as well as building the ensuring that we build a framework that is lasting and cohesive so that the information is not disconnected but is shared and and is being reported out to the the areas that it that needs to get the information to take action um and i would also say that we have begun uh rolling it out in part for those parts that again the policy for those parts that would affect employees rights this is why we propose and send them to as well the union and ocb to ensure that the government is protective and you know protect the rights of our employees as well so again i thank you for your responses and again the legislation was not just is not geared just towards redundancy or putting another layer of um laws

and a book just for the sake of having laws but it's just that there was a it's evident that you know we're not seeing action taken for when things are happening not just to government vehicles but to government property on a whole and moving forward you testify here today that you already have the authority and you have some operating policies we're going to be put in place to move forward thank you thank you for

- 2:02:11 that um mr chair that's it for me um i'm ready to move forward thank you senator lewis thank you senator lewis do i hear a motion for bill number 360224 yes mr chairman you're right you're recognized senator avery lewis Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill No. 36-0224, an act of mind entitled 20, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 51, Subsection I, Section 801, relating to Moving Violation Point System Act, be voted upon favorably in this committee.
- 2:03:00 Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, and be sent favorably to the Committee of Rules and Judiciary. For further action and consideration, I so move. Second. Bill number 360224 has been properly moved by Senator Avery Lewis, seconded by Senator Franklin Johnson. Roll call on Bill number 360224.
- 2:03:31 Senator Angel Bulkus Jr. Senator Bulkus, absent. Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff? Yes. Senator DeGraff? Yes. Senator Ray Fonseca? Yes. Senator Fonseca? Yes. Senator Kenneth L. Gittins? Senator Gittins? Absent. Senator Franklin D. Johnson? Yes.
- 2:04:00 Senator Johnson? Yes. Senator Avery L. Lewis? Yes. Yes. Senator Lewis, yea. Senator Clifford A. Joseph. Yes. Senator Joseph, yea. Mr. Chair, you have five yeas, two absent. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Madam Clerk. Bill number 36-02-24, an act amending Title 20, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 51, Chapter 1, chapter 1 section 801 relating to moving violations points system acts has been favorably voted upon in this committee and will be fit would be forwarded to the committee on rules and judiciary for further consideration and action motion Senator Lewis, you're recognized for your motion.
- 2:05:03 Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I move bill number 360139 and act amending title 281 Virgin Islands Code to assess civil liability for destruction or damage to government property through willful or negligent act be held in the Committee of Homeland Security and Justice and Public Safety until the call of the chair i so move second second bill number 36 0139 and act amending title it's been properly moved it's been properly moved by senator avery lewis seconded by senator franklin johnson and Senator Fonseca.
- 2:05:52 Roll call on Bill Number 360139. Senator Arnold Bulkus, Jr. Senator Bulkus, absent. Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff? Yes. Senator DeGraff, yay. Senator Ray Fonseca? Yay. Senator Fonseca, yay. Senator Kenneth L. Gittins, yes. Senator Gittins, yes. Senator Franklin D. Johnson, yes. Senator Johnson, yes. Senator Avery L. Lewis, yes. Senator Lewis, yes. Senator Clifford A. Joseph, Sr. Yes. Senator Joseph, yes. Mr. Chair, you have six yeas, one absent. Bill number 36-01-39, an act amending Title 33-31.
- 2:07:02 Title 31, Code to Access Civil Liability for Destruction or Damage to Government Property through willful or negligent act will be held in Committee of Homeland Security, Justice, and Public Safety at the call of the Chair. At this time, I'd like to recognize Senator Kenneth Gittins as President and Senator Noble Francis.
- 2:07:42 Okay, at this time, Commissioner Alejandro and Director McIntosh, and we will finish up with um attorney prior here is incredible at this time you're recognized i'm recognizing uh commissioner alejandro for your closing remarks thank you senator we would like to the department of property and procuring myself and the team here with me is assistant commissioner richards chief legal counsel magdalene morancy and the department as well those who have worked with us to ensure that we were able to respond, those employees that have provided the support necessary to ensure that we can move forward in the daily operations. We would like to say thank you. We also would like to thank the legislature, Senator Avery Lewis, for engaging the department, even prior to having those discussions which is important for us again once again mr chair we thank you for the time today and for the questions as well thank you thank you director mcintosh you're recognized for your closing statement thank you um senator joseph and thank you to everyone the senators for your time and
- 2:09:29 favorable consideration of Bill 36-0224. This bill will definitely ensure that the implementation of the point system is actually efficient and fair. I would also like to take the time to congratulate the Bureau of Motor Vehicles employee of the air if I may. In St. Croix is Miss Carol Joseph and here on St. Thomas it's Janelle Edward who happens to be our point system coordinator and she's in the world here in the um audience here today in st thomas again thank you so much thank you for your closing remarks attorney prayer thank you um attorney patricia lynn prior from the department of justice and on behalf of the attorney general and myself i just want to thank you chairman and to all the senators and the other members of the committee for allowing us to testify and to offer input into these and so many other of the important pieces of legislation that come before this body. Just thank you for that.

- 2:10:45 Thank you for your closing remarks as well. Senator Giesin, you're recognized for your point of personal. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair and colleagues, I apologize for my tardiness today as I was dealing with some other pressing matters, one particularly dealing with the Warram Power Authority. But I wanted to also extend heartfelt congratulations and thank you to all our Employee of the Year for all the various departments, agencies, semi-autonomous and autonomous agencies as well. Also, congratulations to the summer employment students. The legislature have done this for many years, and I just would like to say thank you again to my colleagues for ensuring that we're able to participate in this summer employment program for our young people as well. And I hope that they take on everything that they could learn and get off to school, come back, and make this government fully efficient so we could continue to serve the people of the Virgin Islands. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll have a second bite of this apple. I did have a couple of questions for the two measures, but we'll have a second bite of the apple in rules and judiciary. Specifically, I wanted to make sure that the government is doing their part as well to ensure that when government property is damaged, that we're coordinating with the proper agency so we could get the reports in and that we're going after the correct insurance companies so that we could recoup for these damages rather than it being on the backs of the people of the Virgin Islands. In addition, I wanted to know about the coverage for government-owned vehicles as well, as we've had our fair share of this. So we need to ensure that across the board that we, too, as a government, is doing all we're supposed to do.
- 2:12:50 Thank you so much. Thank you, Senator Gittins. The Chair will extend a point of privilege as well to Senator Francis, if you like it. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon to everyone. I want to, first of all, commend the bill sponsor for moving this critical piece of legislation forward. I, too, would like to join in commending all of our employees, government employees, who have been recognized this week earlier in St. Croix and here in the district of St. Thomas and John as well. It's certainly commendable when you see the level of the government employees that have been selected for Employees of the Year. I want to thank them for their contribution to the people of the Virgin Islands and their continued work in respect to it. I also want to extend happy birthday to my colleague and brother Santa Kenneth Gittens yesterday he celebrated his milestone birthday now so I want to say happy birthday to him as well and I know that there is a I attended the police noble summit over at the Weston as well earlier today and there is a wonderful summit that's going on where they're bringing individuals from the National Organization of Black Law Executives here in the territory. We have people from as far as the UK as well as the mainland who has come here to St. Thomas and to the Virgin Islands for the purpose of their conference this year. So I want to commend certainly Commissioner Brooks and his team for hosting of the the summit here again and here in the Virgin Islands, and to really just talk about their ability
- 2:14:38 as a coordinated effort to address some of the issues and topics that they're discussing, of course, is technology, utilization of AI, currently being deployed, as well as human trafficking. So there's some very good topics that have been discussed. They started yesterday, today, and as well as they'll be finishing tomorrow, and they're over at the West End, so I wanna encourage those law enforcement agencies that have not had an opportunity to at least sit in on that conference. There's a wealth of information that's being shared by, again, our black law enforcement executive across the board. I think it'll be a good opportunity for us to sit in and be a part of that discussion, or at least hear from the panelists that's been providing some critical information there, across there. So thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for the time and opportunity, and I look forward to, I know we heard that some of this has been cut short because of WAPA, and certainly we continue to do our work to adjust this WAPA situation, and we really, we'll continue to put our thoughts together and how do we best resolve the issues that we're seeing. WAPA, WAPA is ours, it's certainly a government agencies, and we have to continue to work collectively to be able to address the problem that we're having here in the territory as it pertains to Wafa.
- 2:16:02 Thank you very much Mr. Chair for the time and opportunity. Thank you, thank you Senator Francis. Having no further business, again I'd like to thank my colleagues and thank the staff of the legislature and of course my staff. Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety is hereby adjourned. Thank you.

People named in this transcript

SUSPECTED, and a finding aid only. Names were matched by machine against the spellings used across all 426 of our transcripts, and the title is the one used in the room. Being named here is NOT evidence that a person attended or spoke · only that the name was said. Speech recognition mishears names, so a spelling may be wrong even where no alternative is offered.

14x **Senator Avery Lewis**
heard in this transcript as: Avery L. Lewis, Lewis

11x **Senator Franklin D. Johnson**

heard in this transcript as: Franklin Johnson, Johnson

11x **Commissioner Lisa M. Alejandro**
heard in this transcript as: Alejandro, Lisa Alejandro

10x **Senator Ray Fonseca**
heard in this transcript as: A. Fonseca, Fonseca

9x **Senator Dwayne DeGraff**
heard in this transcript as: DeGraff, Duane M. DeGraff, Dwayne M. DeGraff

9x **Senator Kenneth L. Gittens**
heard in this transcript as: Gittins, Kenneth Gittins, Kenneth L. Gittins

6x **Senator Angel L. Bulkes Jr**
heard in this transcript as: Angel Bulkus Jr, Angel Bulkus Jr., Bulkus

6x **Senator Clifford Joseph**
heard in this transcript as: Clifford A. Joseph, Clifford A. Joseph Sr.

5x **Senator Carla Joseph**
the surname alone also matches: Clifford Joseph; Karla J. Joseph
heard in this transcript as: Joseph

4x **Senator Novelle Francis**
heard in this transcript as: Francis, Noble Francis

2x **Commissioner Mario Brooks**
heard in this transcript as: Brooks

1x **Chairman Karla Joseph**
the surname alone also matches: Clifford Joseph; Carla Joseph
heard in this transcript as: Joseph

Bills and acts referred to

Matched by number against our own acts corpus. The number is what the recognition heard, so it may be wrong; where it resolved, the title is the one the Legislature gave the act.

Referred to but not found in our acts corpus: Bill 36-0224, Bill 36-0139, Bill 36-0244