



35th Legislature Oath of Office Ceremony

Legislature USVI

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- 0:00:01 Left, straight. Madam President, the Taliban, the President, the Ibanez-Nurrake, Maizemir Guzalian Calabar, request formation to post the palace. Post the palace. Post the palace. Caliban, out, close, right, reset, arch, order, arch, left, face, Thank you so much to the Mighty Rays Battalion for posting of the colors we will now have the invocation by bishop leonard and of course the anthem what twice is no harm so we'll also have our national anthem and virgin islands march by the 73rd army band so please remain standing let us pray heavenly father and god it is with reverence and humility that we invoke your presence during this oath of office ceremony for the
- 0:02:04 35th legislature of the United States Virgin Islands. Your word instructs us in 1 Timothy chapter 2 that petitions, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for all people, for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. So in obedience to your mandate, we are here today to present each of these members of the 35th legislature before you for your blessings. As they take this sacred oath of service, grant them the strength and character to be able to fulfill the commitment that they will make today. We pray for the impartation of divine wisdom, understanding, and prudence.
- 0:02:56 As they carry out the work of the people in these Virgin Islands, we ask that you keep your hand of protection on them and their families. Grant them divine health and strength in their bodies, minds, and spirits, so that they will be able to effectively carry out the responsibilities of their office. us. We ask you to especially bless the Senate President and Vice President. We pray for those members who served in the 34th Legislature and pray that they will be able to continue the unfinished work that will benefit the territory. For the newly elected members, we pray for a successful assimilation into the body and that they will become effective legislators in their own right.
- 0:03:43 We pray for unity of purpose in the efforts toward working for the good of the territory. We pray for effectiveness and efficiency in the process of legislation. We pray for strong and strategic relationships among the legislators. We understand that vigorous debate is necessary and beneficial to the process, but we pray that the robust debate and

dialogue will result in the best decisions for the territory. Father we pray that after this ceremony and these legislators get back to the work of the people that they will see the fruits of their labor in the manifestation of a Virgin Islands that is safe and prosperous for all residents of the territory so for these and so many other things that we seek you for we make this petition in the name of your son Jesus Christ and lastly we pray that that you will continue to bless our Virgin Islands, amen.

0:05:09 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:06:39 Thank you, please remain standing at this time we will have the black national anthem by two individuals who contribute immensely to our musical landscape and whose voices are always a privilege to hear Mr. Lorna Freeman and Mr. Malvern Gums.

0:08:00 It's every voice I sing Till earth and heaven ring Ring with the harmonies Of liberty Let our rejoicing rise Highest the listening skies Let it resound God is the rolling sea Sing a song Full of the faith That the tongue past has taught us Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us Facing the rising strong of a new day begun Let us march on till victory is won Snow near the road we tried Bitter the chastening rod Felt in the days when hope unborn had died Yet with the steady beat, I'm not a weary feat Come to the place for which our Father sigh

0:10:04 We have come over a way that with tears has been watered We have come, treading the path through the blood of the slaughtered. Out from the gloomy past till now we stand at last Where the white gleam on the bright star is cast God of the wearies, God of those silent tears Thou who has brought us thus far on our way Thou who has by thy might led us into the light Keep us forever in the path we play Lest our feet Straight from the places Our God where we've met He blessed our hearts Drunk with the wine of the worlds We forget Thee Shadowed beneath my hand

0:11:56 May we forever stand True to our God True to our native land you may be seated thank you so much Lorna and Malvern in acknowledging our dignitaries special and platform guests here with us today we recognize the Honorable Tregenza A. Roach Esquire Lieutenant Governor of the Virgin Islands and I will ask that you hold your applause until the end the Honorable Reese Hodge Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands The Honorable Deborah S. Watlington, Poseidon Judge of the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands. The Honorable Judge Kathleen Mackay, Superior Court of the Virgin Islands. The Honorable Judge Denise Francois of the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands. Senators-elect of the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands and all former senators. members of the governor's cabinet, distinguished commissioners, directors, and senior staff, Bishop Carswell A. Leonard and all members of the clergy, Ms. Caroline Fox, supervisor of elections. We also recognize our visiting dignitaries from the BVI, the Honorable Marlon A. Penn, Minister for Health and Social Development, and 8th District Representative. The Honorable Alvera Maduro-Kanes, Junior Minister for Tourism, and 6th District Representative. The Honorable Carvin Malone, Member of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, and Territorial at-Large Representative. And to all family, friends, supporters, and the Virgin Islands community, thank you for your presence here today and for viewing today's live stream in this past election your actions spoke volumes and you have done your part in our democratic process to the senators-elect I encourage you to first take a deep breath and take in this moment yes there is much work to be done and great things to accomplish

0:14:32 on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands but know that their faith in you and your faith and knowing that you were called to serve will guide you throughout your term in office today is your day your day senators your day and we congratulate you for putting the Virgin Islands first as our representatives i also encourage you to reflect reflect on your why why did you choose to serve hold on to that why and never let go the journey will not be easy because we know that anything worth having or anything that comes too easy is not worth having reflect on the good in your hearts and never let darkness negativity or pessimism control your thoughts words or deeds reflect on the change that you indeed want to see for the entire virgin islands a united virgin islands a virgin islands that is strong and progressive reflect on your true self and the impact that you have as a leader in our community. Lastly, reflect on what you can contribute every time you draft legislation, participate in a committee meeting, ask a line of questioning, and each time you cast a vote. Contribute to solutions because that is your job as a public servant a job that we lift you up in prayer to take on but remember that this is not a marathon it's not a sprint it's a marathon and that your focus perseverance and diligent efforts will

0:16:29 always be required and what is also required is the reading of the certification and presentation of senators so to officially note your roles as elected senators i would like to call to the podium a woman who works so hard and we lift you up in prayer as well as supervisor fox the supervisor of elections miss caroline fox good morning and happy new year to all i certify that pursuant to title 18 chapter 3 section 47 as supervisor of elections i do hereby certify that on November 18, 2022, all duties relative to the certification of the November 8, 2022 elections was completed and it has been determined by all valid votes cast in that election that the following persons have been elected members of the 35th legislature. I now present the legislators. As your name is alphabetically called, please stand. First, we start with the Senator at large, Angel Volquez, Jr. Stand to be recognized and then take your seat.

- 0:18:02 Senators, District of St. Thomas, St. John, Marvin Blyden, Dwayne M. DeGraff, Ray Fonseca, Alma Francis Heiliger, Donna Fred Gregory, Carla Joseph, Milton Potter, Senators District of St. Croix, Diane Capehart, Samuel Carrion, Novel E. Francis Jr., Kenneth Gittins, Javan James Maurice James Franklin D Johnson will all members of the 35th legislature please stand ladies ladies and gentlemen I present to you the members of the 35th legislature of the Virgin Islands thank you remain standing
- 0:20:16 Thank you so much. You may all be seated. We will now have a musical selection to enjoy by Liz Combee. Hailin from the Big Island of St. Croix. They say these mountains cannot be moved And they said these chains will never break But they don't know you like we do There is power in your name And we've heard that there is no way through And we've heard these chains will never break They haven't seen what you can do There is power in your name So much power in your name Move the immovable Break the unbreakable God we believe God we believe for it From the impossible
- 0:22:18 We'll see a miracle God we believe Yes we believe for it We know that hope is never lost For there is still an empty grave God, we believe no matter what There is power in your name So much power in your name Move the immovable Break the unbreakable God, we believe Yes, we do God, we believe We believe for you We'll see a miracle God, we believe God, we believe for you Oh, yeah You are the way when there seems to be no way And we'll trust in you, God, you have the final say You are the way when there seems to be no way We'll trust in you, God, you have the final say The final say Move in, move along Break the unbreakable Lord, we believe Yes, we believe, holy
- 0:24:14 From the impossible We'll see a miracle Lord, we believe, holy That we believe So Ms. Kambi, we're going to claim you on St. Thomas as well. But we thank you so much for that beautiful, beautiful selection. Indeed, when we believe. and at this time I know that all the family members and friends even our senators-elect you were waiting for this moment and to administer the oath of office we will have the Honorable Reese S. Hodge Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands Thank you.
- 0:25:56 Will you rise? Raise your right hand and repeat after me. I Do solemnly swear that I will support, obey, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States applicable to the Virgin Islands and the laws of the Virgin Islands, that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge the duties of Senator of the 35th legislature the United States Virgin Islands with fidelity. So help me God. Congratulations Senators.
- 0:28:20 we can give them another round of applause our senators of the 35th legislature of the virgin islands and we'll give them a moment to congratulate each other i know they're heading right over to the capitol building following today's program Thank you. yes good morning good morning okay now that our hugs and congratulations are completed senators you may be seated and now a musical selection that can be called a staple for this occasion as it for what it It represents the symbolic meaning and significance of this song. I encourage you, if this is the first time that you are hearing it, please listen to every single word.
- 0:30:23 We have Valiant Virgin Isles by Mr. Gilchrist Sproul. Thank you. for you and me, grand majestic vistas, charming emerald sisters, none can equal their beauty. We celebrate our history, great men and women of dignity, firm determination, talented inspiration timeless is the legacy lift your voice in thanks and praise for momentous glorious days pressing on through Gorgeous trials, valiant are my virgin eyes I sing of crucian royalty Three queens who fought for equality With fearless hearts they dare to break apart The hateful chains of human slavery Without her sister where would we be St. Croix the largest of the three Resistance is her truest name Her candor without shame and matchless bravery, lift your voice in thanks and praise for momentous, glorious days, pressing on through arduous trials, valiant are my virgin Isles.
- 0:33:20 St. Thomas Rock, enduring, weak and bright, Ensuring futures filled with hope and pride A melting pot of peoples and languages Cradle of advancement for all who try St. John in 1733 Cant a bolombo and a kwashi Despite the traitors' faithless acts That saved their masters' backs For six months they were free God give us wisdom as we stand firm in perfect unity together victory can be ours we must not bow to powers that threaten liberty Sing, oh, sing of brilliant minds Fine examples of mankind History's pages tell no lies Valiant are my virgin isles Sing, oh, sing in thanks and praise For momentous, glorious days Pressing on through wondrous trials Noble are these Virgin Isles Determined are my Virgin Isles Valiant are my Virgin Isles Isles Always perfectly done. Thank you so much.
- 0:35:51 Thank you so much. As I mentioned, that is a staple of our swearing in, our oath of office ceremony. an additional tradition is the call of the conch shell so we're going to make sure that we do not close today's program without having mr. Jason Mead do the call of the conch shell it is so important that we maintain and hold on to our culture our traditions our history now there are so many individuals who played an instrumental role in making today's ceremony possible if you have a program booklet please be sure to look at that last page again gratitude and saying thank you is so so

important so we would like to extend an extra special thank you to all of the individuals who worked so hard to make today possible we will now retire the colors and close with the benediction by bishop carswell a leonard and i'm going to ask kindly for the recessional march if you can please remain seated as our senators exit the bandstand again for the recessional march we are asking for everyone to please remain seated until it is completed So we will retire the colors and have the benediction.

0:37:55 Please stand. Left side, right. Left side, right.

0:38:33 All right, hold, left, hit. Retire the colors. Come on, come on, come on, come on, come on. Father, we want to thank you for honoring our requests, allowing us to have a beautiful, safe ceremony without incident or accident we ask you continue to bless your servants as they now go to do your work now may the lord bless us may the lord keep us may the lord cause his faces shine upon us and give us peace and may the lord continue to bless our beloved virgin islands amen we will now have the recessional march and we are kindly asking for all persons to please remain seated while we have the recessional march Thank you.

0:41:09 Thank you. Thank you.

0:42:09 thank you so much once again ladies and gentlemen it was truly indeed my honor to serve as your mistress of ceremony we thank you for joining us for today's 35th legislature oath of office ceremony the day will continue at the capitol building for the organization of the 35th legislature at this time our senators they are taking a photo on the stairs so just give them a moment but you are indeed no longer held hostage thank you for being here today And do enjoy the rest of your afternoon.

0:43:24 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Let's go.

0:45:54 We'll see you next time. Transcription by CastingWords so Thank you. Thank you.

0:48:24 Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back.

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.

2x **Senator Novelle Francis**
heard in this transcript as: Denise Francois