



09-08-22 Committee on Rules and Judiciary

Legislature USVI

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- 0:00:00 Satsang with Mooji I love you Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I love you I love you, too Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. I love you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Let's get started. We'll be right back. Let's get started. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Good morning to the people of the Virgin Islands, colleagues, central staff, employees,
- 0:16:56 i'm honoring testifiers uh the committee on rules and judiciary meeting of thursday september 8 2022 is hereby called to order um if we have a pretty short agenda but i think a very important one um but before before i begin we i'm sure we're all guilty of viewing the videos that have been circulating in the territory about the brawls, the brawls that have been occurring on the various public school campuses across the territory, the disturbing videos, I must say. The level of venom, the level of anger, the level of hate that we're seeing far exceeds what you would typically see as a schoolyard fight, and we're seeing that we, you know, we are accustomed of seen from time to time but something feels different about what we're seeing today something unusual is happening with our young people many of them as I mentioned before are struggling as a result of the challenges experienced by their generation think about it one in three high school students report persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness. A 40% increase from 2009. Thoughts of suicide have risen by a whopping 57% among youth ages 10 to 24. Our children are experiencing bullying, not just in school, but online.
- 0:18:32 That's something that we never experienced when we were in school. Parents, if you have not already done so, We need to work on intentionally building a close relationship with our children. It's that important. We need to provide them with structure and boundaries. We must work on teaching them healthy habits, and we need to model positive behaviors. And to the village, that's you and me, rather than merely passing around dramatic pictures of teenagers engaged in violence let us take an oath today to keep a watchful eye on our children not through whatsapp videos but through getting involved through some serious involvement in their lives it is in our best interest as the village madam clerk can we please have a

roll call Yes, Mr. Chair.

- 0:19:43 Senator Angel Bolquez-Kess, Jr. Senator Bolquez, present. Senator Nobel E. Francis, Jr. Senator Francis, absent. Senator Kenneth L. Gittins. Senator Gittins, absent. Senator Franklin D. Johnson. Senator Johnson, present.
- 0:20:18 Senator Carla J. Joseph. Senator Joseph, present. Senator Milton E. Potter. Senator Potter, present. Genevieve R Whitaker present Senator Whitaker present mr. chair we have five present two absent thank you very much madam clerk colleagues we have a quorum so we will proceed a madam clerk are there any pieces of correspondence to be read into the record at this time Yes, Mr. Chair, to September 8, 2022, the Honorable Milton Potter, Chairman, Committee on Rules and Judiciary, Capitol Building, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, 00802.
- 0:21:19 Dear Senator Potter, please excuse my late arrival to today's hearing of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary. I have a scheduling conflict as I am attending a portion of the USVI Community Business Forum and providing input on our islands preparation for the increased ship calls expected for St. Croix in the upcoming cruising season. I note the importance of the agenda items to be discussed today and hope to weigh in on the Sports Commission legislation and lead discussion on my proposed amendments to the Virgin Islands election laws upon my arrival. I thank you in advance for your indulgence and understanding in this regard. Sincerely, Kenneth L. Gittins, Senator.
- 0:22:19 This concludes the correspondence. Thank you very much, Madam Clerk. Madam Clerk, can you please read today's agenda into the record? Yes, Mr. Chair. Today's agenda, September 8, 2022. The Committee on Rules and the Judiciary has scheduled a meeting for Thursday, September 8th, 2022 at 9.30 in the Earl B. Otley Legislative Hall on St. Thomas to consider the following. In Block 1, Bill No. 34-0233, an act amending Title III, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 18, Subchapter 2, Sections 312, relating to the members of the VI Sports Commission, and Sections 313 and 314, relating to the duties of the VI Sports Commission, sponsored by Senator Javon E. James, Sr. Invited testifiers, the Honorable Calvert White, Commissioner, Department of Sports Park and Recreation, the Honorable Joseph Buschelti, Commissioner, Department of Tourism, Mr. Leon Hunt, Chairman, VI Sports Commission.
- 0:23:48 In block two, the Committee on Rules and Judiciary will discuss potential changes to the election laws the Virgin Islands. Invited testifiers, Carolyn Fox, Virgin Islands Supervisor of Election, and Gwen Molinar, League of Women Voters. This concludes the reading of the agenda, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Madam Clerk. Colleagues, like I mentioned, we have a short agenda, but short but meaningful agenda we will proceed let's begin with block number one who speaks to bill number 34-0233 senator james you're recognized for your introduction good morning to the people of the u.s virgin islands thank you mr chair for the time Good morning colleagues. Colleagues, I offer bill number 34-0233 and recommending Title 3, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 18, Subchapter 2, Section 312 relating to the members of the VI Sports Commission and Sections 313 and 314 relating to the duties of the VI Sports Commission.
- 0:25:10 Ever since my tenure in the 33rd legislature of the Virgin Islands as the chair of the Committee on Youth Sports, Parks, and Recreation, my vision for the territory, and I repeat, the territory, was sports tourism. If you Google sports tourism, you will see that it's a big contribution to the revenues on the U.S. mainland. Now, some may say, well, if it works on the U.S. mainland, it might not work here. Well, I beg to differ. We have the infrastructure, we have the funds, and the necessary resources in this government to make sure that we create the blueprint for sports tourism in the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- 0:25:53 While in the 33rd Legislature of the Virgin Islands, I worked with the administration, specifically Governor Bryan, to make sure that the defunct commission is up and running. Prior to me being in the Senate, the VI Sports Commission was established, but it never got off the ground because of some issues with membership and funding. I want to say thank you to the Committee on Finance, specifically the members of the 33rd Legislature of the Virgin Islands for believing in my vision to revive the VI Sports Commission by appropriating \$100,000 in the budget. And ever since then, we have done so for the 33rd and 34th Legislature of the Virgin Islands. The bill that I am seeking to get passed here today is amending Title III, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 18, Subchapter 2.
- 0:26:57 Section 312 of the code speaks to the members of the commission. And my vision for offering this bill is specifically for those individuals who serve in the private sector. to be able to have continuity on the VI Sports Commission because most members, by virtue of their position, they serve at the pleasure of the governor. For example, the Commission of Education, the Commission of Tourism, EDA, and other individuals. My vision, like I said before, is to make sure those individuals in the private sector do four-year terms instead of five-year terms so when a new administration comes in at least there are some individuals who can continue continue with the vision and overall plan for sports tourism in the virgin islands this bill also seeks to establish what will constitute a quorum currently we have 13 members who serve on the vi sports commission so of course a quorum would be seven members to be able to take action. As a result of COVID-19, we saw the importance of using Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and other video conference platforms. This bill

seeks to establish that individuals can be either in person or by video teleconference when it comes to attending the meetings for the VI Sports Commission, so individuals do not have to travel back and forth as we know it is costly.

0:28:36 and especially with the issues with Seabourn Airlines and Cape Air. Based on the bill, the commission will have to promulgate regulations as necessary to carry out the purposes of this subchapter in which I'm seeking to amend. Section 313 will be also amended by mandating that the VI Sports Commission work together to put a sports conference together. they will have to come to the legislature and include it in its in the fiscal year budget they will be tasked with the responsibility of hosting and creating an agenda for annual sports for the annual sports conference and as we know the best time to hold a conference in the u.s virgin islands will be in the months of october through december the reason for we are trying to get individuals from the u.s mainland the eastern caribbean and all over the world to come here when most of the places on the u.s mainland are cold so from october to december the vi sports commission would have to decide where when they would hold the vi sports conference and of course it will alternate between the St. Croix and St. Thomas St. John districts. I know some might argue the fact that St. Croix is in need of hotel rooms, and I do agree, and that is why I've been pushing for Executive Director Carlton Dow to fulfill his commitment on making sure that we get that hotel at the Henry E. Rosen Airport. More than likely, the first sports conference will be held on St. thomas because st thomas has the capacity the rooms that are that are necessary to get this vi sports conference up and running as we heard during the budget hearings and most recently i think in the committee of the hold the frenchman reef hotel will be coming back online and other hotels

0:30:39 last but not least this bill seeks to include all the registered sport organizations within the vi sports commission database to be included in the discussion of the conference to discuss the future of sports tourism in the virgin islands and to implement the over 40 plus mandates in title three chapter 18 sub chapter two of the virgin islands code that established the vi sports Commission and they shall publish the agenda and all the progress on their website. I've been pushing for Mr. Leon Hunt, the chairman of the VI Sports Commission, to use the money that we have appropriated. I think it's \$100,000 to fund the necessary positions as far as administrative assistance, public relations officer and all the other things that were required of them when they part when they brought down the the request for the budget and the reason why they would have to know put a report into the legislature before June 1st based on this bill is because by then the budget hearings will be in progress we can have an idea of what they are planning for the next fiscal year so we be able to fund their vision and lastly in the virgin islands code title 3 chapter 18 sub chapter 2 section 314 speaks to a national sports policy ever since the vi sports commission has been up and running in the 33rd legislature of the virgin islands one of the the greatest mandates within

0:32:30 the the vi sports commission is the virgin island sports policy and it speaks to developing and publishing a framework for the development guidance and administration of sports recreation leisure and wellness programs in the territory territory along with other mandates so this bill seeks to mandate that the vi sports commission shall develop and publish the national sports policy that is long overdue based on Title III, Virgin Islands Code, Section 3 and 4, not later than 180 days after the effective date of this Act. In closing, I want to say, my colleagues, please support this measure.

0:33:09 This is a revenue generator. Once you have that sports conference, of course, individuals will be staying in hotels, renting cars. They will be dining, buying liquor, utilizing our infrastructure. and most importantly, promoting and marketing the Virgin Islands using our marketing and advertising resources within the Department of Tourism and social media. So please, I'm asking you to support this measure, and as we know, Commissioner Calvert-White is doing a great job of utilizing those federal dollars from the hurricanes Irma and Maria to improve our infrastructure. So I predict within a year, the Virgin Islands would be the prime destination for sports tourism. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the time. Thank you, colleagues. Thank you very much, Senator James.

0:34:02 Colleagues, we have two very important guests or testifiers here before us today to weigh in on this bill. We have Commissioner Calvert-White, Commissioner of Sports Parks and Recreation, and representing the Commissioner of Tourism, Mr. Joe Buschelt. We have Assistant Commissioner Alney Henneman-Tadman. So we're going to ask Commissioner Calvert-White to proceed with your testimony, please.

0:34:40 Commissioner, before you begin, Commissioner, hold your horses for one second. I know we had a correspondence that just came in, so I'm going to ask our clerk to read that into the record. Yes, Mr. Chair. Honorable Milton D. Potter, Chair, Committee on Rules and Judiciary, 34th Legislature of the Virgin Islands Capitol Building, St. Thomas VI, 0 0 8 0 4. Dear Senator Potter, please excuse my tardiness. Due to a previously scheduled commitment, I will be arriving late to the committee meeting on rules and judiciary scheduled for today, Thursday, September 8th, 2022. I thank you in advance for your understanding in this matter and sincerely apologize for any inconvenience my tardiness may cause. Regards, Senator Novel E. Francis Jr., Senate Vice President, 34th Legislature of the Virgin Islands.

- 0:35:49 This concludes the reading. Thank you very much, Madam Clerk. Commissioner, I'm going to ask you to hold for one more second since we got a correspondence from, I believe, Mr. Leon Hunt. So, Madam Clerk, can you please read Leon Hunt's testimony into the record, and then we'll proceed with Commissioner White. white leon hunt chairman of the vi sports commission testifying on september 9th september 8th 2022 vi legislator legislatures committee on rules and judiciary regarding bill number 340233 sorry for my absence as I am not able to reschedule other matters on hand due to time constraint as the VI Commission Commission come as the VI Sports Commission chairman I studied the importance of today's hearing below you will see five changes slash improvements that I understand will will help the Virgin Islands sporting sector become more efficient. One, I agree. The bill amends Title III, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 18, Subchapter II, Section 312, by increasing the service term from four years to five years of the private sector individuals appointed by the governor to the Virgin Islands Sports Commission. This helps the standing commission see through their plans as government changes terms.
- 0:37:39 Two, I agree establishing the five members, establishing that five members constitute a quorum and that a vote of a majority of the members is required for action by the commission and establishing that members may appear at meetings either in person or by video teleconferencing. We learned through the 2019 COVID pandemic that you can still come together and be productive in the case an individual is unable to attend. Three, I agree. This bill also amends section 313 by requiring the Virgin Islands Sports Commission to host an annual sports conference, submit a report regarding its progress as it relates to its mandate under section 313. The bill requires the commission to establish regulations. This is a plan that many other organizations in the past have tried to obtain, but ended up short due to the lack of resources and planning. With the support of the Virgin Islands government, the private sector, and the Olympic Committee, we have a chance to make it happen. Four, I agree. This bill also amends section 314 by requiring that the national sports policy be updated from time to time. We live in a world where technology, laws, and policy are constantly changing.
- 0:39:36 To compete with the rest of the world, we have to stay ahead of the ball game and make frequent logistical updates. Number five, I agree. This bill requires that the commission develop and publish a national sports policy within six months after the effective date of this act. See number four for the response. Okay, number four said, we live in a world where technology, laws, and policy are constantly changing. To compete with the rest of the world, we have to stay ahead of the ball game and make frequent logistical updates. Thank you for your time. And again, I am sorry I am not able to be there today. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. Love Virgin Islands, that's who we are. Leon Hunt.
- 0:40:36 This concludes the reading of his testimony. Thank you very much, Madam Clark. Commissioner White, you may now proceed with your testimony, sir. I thought you would be a gentleman and let the young lady go first, but I will proceed. Good morning, everybody. Good day, Senator Potter, Chairman of the Committee of Rules and Judiciary, committee and non-committee members and the listening and viewing audience i am calvert white the commissioner of the department of sports park and recreation here to testify on bill number 34 that's 0233 an act amending title 3 virgin islands code chapter 18 sub chapter 2 section 312 relating to the members of the VI Sports Commission and sections 313 and 314 relating to the duties of the Sports Commission as a board member I would like to make it clear that my testimony today is solely of my opinion as I do not speak for the entire Sports Commission that is the duty of the chair section one page one line nine strikes five members to make a quorum and adds the number seven as the board had already adopted robert's rule of law with the number of members being 13 the committee recognized that it needed seven members to form a quorum and as such was already operating in that manner page two line five strikes raise funds to host an annual sports conference while i see the benefit of hosting a sports conference in a territory i agree that raising
- 0:42:33 funds to do to do so should not be the responsibility of this board the territory would face several obstacles concerning hosting such an event the first and most obvious would be the number of rooms needed to accommodate the individuals attending and the necessary space to host the event while i think the university of the virgin island sports and fitness center may be a possible location to host this event the norm for an event of this magnitude would be a venue that can provide large ballroom space with the capability of being split into smaller breakout rooms rooms for feeding participants and rooms for housing participants having all these amenities at one venue will also cut cut down on the cost of transportation for the participants of the event hopefully with the completion and renovation of the marriott frenchman reef hotel we will soon have a venue capable of hosting a sports conference with all the necessary amenities in one location i also have no objection to changing the events timeline to june through september to october to december with sport tourism now being a focus for the territory the ideal time to have people traveling to our island to experience our beautiful weather is when it's cold where they live i support the amendment to this bill and i stand ready to answer any questions you may have thank you very much commissioner and i just want to clear up the record uh our policy here at rules is age before beauty and that is why miss henneman um went after you commissioner just for the record uh miss uh henneman tadman you may proceed welcome and you may proceed with your testimony Good day, Alan Henneman

Todman, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Tourism.

0:44:31 Good day, honorable senators, legislative staff, ladies and gentlemen in the chamber, members of the media, and viewing and listening audience. Thank you for inviting our department to provide testimony on bill number 34-0233, an act amending Title III, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 18, Subchapter II, Section 312, relating to the members of the VI Sports Commission, and Sections 313 and 314, relating to the duties of the VI Sports Commission, as it pertains to the subject matter to aid in discussions. Sports tourism highlights. Sport events have returned to the territory. International sailing events, such as the St. Thomas International Regatta, continued to draw competitors and visitors to the territory, and helped solidify the USVI's position as a highly desirable destination for water-based sporting events. The second USVI Tennis Cup was held May 2022 at the Buccaneer Hotel in St. Croix after a two-year hiatus. Part of the Caribbean Cup Tennis Series, there are two consecutive ITF Junior tournaments. More than 300 players, coaches, and spectators attended the two-week event sponsored by the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism. St. Thomas hosted the 2021 Paradise Jam College Basketball Tournament at the UVI Sports and Fitness Center. The men's tournament took place November 19th to the 22nd, followed by the women's event from November 25th to the 27th. For the first time ever, Paradise Jam partnered with ESPN, which streamed all games on its ESPN3 and ESPN Plus platforms. The YES! USVI Basketball Classic for Division II college teams was December 31st, 2021 to January 2nd, 2022 at the Antilly Schools Marin Center in St. Thomas. We are looking forward to hosting both events again this year with more teams and more fans. In June, we celebrated Aaliyah Boston Day in St. Thomas, the local daughter of the soil and college basketball superstar plays for the South Carolina Gamecocks. The NCAA champion for the South Carolina Gamecocks unveiled a billboard to welcome all travelers to St. Thomas at the Cyril E. King Airport and the territory celebrated her accomplishments with a festive parade.

0:47:08 Blending sports with promotions and marketing, the USVI was selected as one of the locations in the highly coveted 2022 Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition. Five WNBA stars, Sue Bird, Brianna Stewart, Tia Kupa, Nika Aguimiki, and Didi Richards posed for photographer Loretta Houston in St. Thomas. St. Croix was featured for the second part of the SI shoot with Camille Cusic, Katrina Scott and Cammie Crawford. During the last few months, we've increased brand exposure to 21 billion media impressions across global media outlets. The territories cyclists continue to promote the USVI on the US mainland. Three members of the USVI delegation, which included Christian Stead mango tree riders and left lane cyclers, partnered Labor Day weekend for the 100-meter Metro Atlantic Cycling Club One Love Century Ride in Atlanta, Georgia. Cyclists wore USVI branded jerseys promoting the destination throughout the entire course of 1,800 registered cyclists and fans. Conclusion. The Department of Tourism stands ready to execute our mandate of marketing the U.S. Virgin Islands as a marquee cruise and overnight travel destination through the promotion of sports tourism, culture, festivals and all other supporting niche markets. We will continue to support our local sports events in tandem with public and private sectors as such events display the territory's talented athletes and enhance the community's quality of life. Sports tourism is also integral to supplementing the group incentive and meeting travel market, as these events increase heads in beds, stimulating the economy and growing the USVI marketing presence through media syndicates, social platforms, influencers and team fans. In order to stay competitive, we shall continue to market aggressively and take advantage of partnerships that are unique and beneficial to positioning the territory as a leading overnight destination. We are thankful to have a seat on the VI Sports Commission Board as it allows our department to have input in marketing initiatives. I am pleased to provide testimony and I'm available to address any questions you may have. Alan E. Henneman-Tadman, Assistant Commissioner, on behalf of Commissioner Joseph Buschelta, Department of Tourism. Thank you.

0:49:53 Thank you very much Ms. Hanneman Todman. It seems as though we have been recently sowing the seeds for viable sports for the Virgin Islands as a viable sports tourism destination. I wanted to hear from you when you and the commissioner and your executive team get together to discuss the vision for tourism here in the territory. Where do you envision sports, tourism, just from a percentage of the tourists draw here in the territory? What piece of the pie do you anticipate sports, tourism playing?

0:50:41 If that's the answer, if that's the question that I should ask. Good morning again, Alany Henneman-Tadman. sports tourism falls within what we consider meeting and incentives and groups and so it is a big component because of that niche market because teams don't only come with their players most events come with fans so it's a win-win for us and it's important for us on two levels not just for the heads and beds coming into the territory, but it's also important for us for the community. And so we value sports tourism, and I don't want to say over other niche markets, but it's a community wellness package with sports tourism, because you have on the ground support of the local athletes and the teams and so forth, but it also generates big revenues and everybody's talking about the return of the Frenchman's Reef, and we know the importance of having groups come in and help the hotel sustain capacity. So group travel is important, but sports tourism checks a number of boxes for us.

- 0:52:00 Thank you. Thank you for your response. Colleagues, we're going to proceed with our four-minute round, and we're going to begin with Senator Angel Boulkes. Senator Bulkers, you're recognized for your four minutes Good morning and thank you Mr. Chair Good morning to the testifiers and the listening audience I will say that sport commissions provide such an intricate full service and their primary function is attracting sporting events in our area but also must provide marketing and securing sponsorship and volunteers and go in between to make sure that hotels, transportation, providers, and attractions, such as restaurants and venues, have to be in place to accommodate the fluctuation of tourists, sport tourists. And I believe that it's important that we all try to focus on the logistics of those things.
- 0:52:59 And in the testimony, I noticed that a number of things were mentioned concerning two specific things. Finding a viable area to conduct such events. We know that in St. Croix the stadium isn't fully functional as yet, but that would have been one of the venues that could have been utilized for such events. Here on St. Thomas, as my colleague mentioned, things might start up a bit sooner and I'm looking forward to that and also mirroring that on the island of St. Croix. Now when it comes to boards and organizations, they often have a role of raising funds and empowering the organization to actualize their missions or their vision. Why is it that the board doesn't have a responsibility for raising funds at this time?
- 0:53:54 Is it a question for Commissioner White? A question to a board member, yes. Commissioner it commissioner calvert white sports park recreation uh senator if you look at the makeup senator if you look at the the board uh it's made up of of set two minutes from the governor's team uh myself i the commissioner of education um the commission of tourism you have the director of eda um these are individuals that i i think with the role that we play in the departments that we run uh it would be very difficult on on those individuals and again i'm not speaking for the board i'm speaking for myself to be involved in fundraising for uh this board keep in mind this board was created uh to come up with the policies and regulations that regulate sports in the territory, not necessarily a fundraising committee. So that was the reason why my stance was, I don't think the fundraising should have been done from the Sports Commission. Understood, but there are quite a few members who are aligned with the private sector that could potentially form some sort of fiscal or financial committee within the board.
- 0:55:26 Just suggestionary, not saying what to do. But I still think that there is capacity to be able to do that if the board chooses to do that. And I think it will further enhance what the board can do moving forward. I also have a question concerning any foreseeable challenges. I know you mentioned utilizing UVI or Frenchman's Reef once that is fully running as different venues. But are there any other foreseeable challenges that we need to know about right now? Other than the hotel rooms, no, I don't think so.
- 0:56:02 I think it's a no-brainer that the Virgin Islands would be a premier spot for sports tourism. Myself and my team are already preparing for that with the Department of Tourism. Next month, October 22nd to the 24th, I think it is, uh we'll be attending the teams which is one of the biggest teams event sports conference in america and the purpose of us attending that event is to go out and seek possible events to come to the territory so uh we're moving head forward even before we have the hotel rooms obviously with events you you usually plan two years out so we're starting from now to bring events to the territory late 2023-24. Thank you for that answer. Commissioner, I'm not beating up on you. I know you're wearing two hats today, but I just wanted to know from a board member. Mr. Chair, can I ask one other question, please? Yes, Senator Bulkas. You may proceed. Thank you, Chairman. My last question has to do with one of the mandates of the board, particularly when it comes to the management of sports records in the territory.
- 0:57:12 Has the Sports Commission collaborated with DPNR or any of its libraries to create a record of management or an exhibition in any of the libraries or museums for Virgin Islands sports icons and legends? We have not contacted DPNR, but we have had the conversation in several of our meetings. One of our mandates is to create the Virgin Islands Sports Hall of Fame. And that conversation led to the Hall of Fame being presented possibly in our libraries, a section in the library where you can go and see the individuals that were selected to the Virgin Islands Hall of Fame. I don't think we've gotten to that mandate yet, but it has been a discussion. Commissioner, I would love to collaborate with you and the board with that endeavor as well. Thank you for the time, Mr. Chair.
- 0:58:03 Thank you very much, Senator Boulkes, and Senator Franklin Johnson, you may proceed with your four minutes. Good morning, thank you very much, Mr. Chair, good morning to my colleagues, good morning to the testifiers, good viewing and listening audience. Sports, tourism have been a topic for years now. I'm glad to see that we're moving someplace with it, but we need to move aggressively. Time waits on no man. I will start off my question with an assistant commissioner. Good morning.
- 0:58:45 How are you doing, Ms. Animán? Ms. Animán. Ms. Animán. Ms. Animán. How many sports ambassadors do you have at this current time that are in any type of marketing with the Department of Tourism at this time? We have so many sports ambassadors that have achieved great things on the mainland. Are we in any kind of discussion with any of them to help us along this journey here? Good morning, Alan E. Henneman Todman. Senator, we sponsor a number of local

TAV contracts with some of them, but when we do get sponsorship requests into the territory and into the department, we sponsor. So for example, we have a young lady now who is taking off in the Gulf world. We're finalizing an agreement with her and I won't reveal the information until we've finalized it through PMP. And then we have a number of other potential sponsorships and agreements that are in place that we are working with. Some of them come directly through straight sponsorships where they go to an event and we just sponsor, or it's an actual agreement like the one we're securing right now.

1:00:08 But we do have a number of them. My next question is probably not in your preview, but... Two minutes. like st thomas lately i saw a beautiful picture of leah boston and and that's beautiful to have and i i could recall seeing one of those billboards on st croix and henry rosen airport with mr tim duncan and i don't know what the reason why we have not put it back up i i don't know if you could answer i seems like commissioner white have a little information for me on that i i do um because the port authority uh reached out to me personal to get in contact with tim about putting that order what i need the public to understand is is when you're dealing with professional athletes in tim's case a former professional athlete um because these individuals have agents and stuff like that i can't just go to the airport today and just put a post of tim up without his permission um so i know for a fact and and this was just as early as last month the the port authority has been uh a conversation with uh tim team about what poster she wants well because it's his likeness he has to approve the picture that's going up um but you know i've heard the talk having put his post up and all that uh please be assured that are complicated with each other um there's also regulation for example if you want to use a picture with him in a san antonio sports jersey stuff like that has to be played by the nba and stuff like that so that's the the obstacle what is right now 30 seconds as late as last month that they are in communication with tim's team all right then last and not least one of the major setbacks in the territory is experiencing his activities for visitors to attend during the evening having known nighttime events have plagued

1:02:01 the territory for years the department of tourism working with any business owner to encourage evening events i say that and it probably would be a joint thing with with the commission too and to do a lot of day activity and is there any kind of calibration to make sure that we try to put some of these events in the evening time alany henneman tadman senator we continue to partner and support the private sector when they come into the department And as you know, we have hundreds of requests to sponsor events for the territory, whether it's a comedy show, event on the greens. Our department is actually looking to do something in November to just support the flow of having basketball travellers, the return of travel to the territory during the Thanksgiving period.

1:03:02 So we're looking at hosting an event and holding an event to just give an additional layer of something to do. So that's why you see our department through the Department of Festivals sponsoring a lot of private events that give you that alternate experience late night. Because once you're on an island and the town's shut down between five and eight and people go to restaurants, people are looking for things to do.

1:03:31 Mr. Chair, at the end time, I've been called. Can I wrap up with one question, Mr. Chair? Yes, yes, Senator, you may wrap up. Sports events have returned to the territory. Is there a listing or a program of events planned for 2023? If there is, how many will be hosting on each island? That would be to the Commissioner. I know that we started back with a lot of our events because of the opening up from COVID. have kind of agenda already lined up yeah what we started i think in the past year is trying to do a six-month calendar so individuals who want to participate in events you'll be able to see those events six months out um we are picking up a lot of the events that were stopped doing covid um i think it's my job to do a better job of getting that information out to the public that's That's why a sports calendar, it's so important.

1:04:26 A lot of times you see events competing against each other, whether they're having them on the same day, doing the same time. So we'll continue working on that sports calendar so that people are aware of what's going on in the territory. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Senator Johnson. Commissioner White and Assistant Commissioner Henneman Tadman, I was just curious, you guys are the subject matter experts here. In terms of the required conference, alternating on each island or in each district, I was curious to sort of get an understanding as to the nature of these conferences. What would be the big draw to lure sporting fans, I guess, to the territory in big numbers um you know i mean is there some headliner some big name person what you know what will it really take to have a really successful robust conference that folks um who are interested in sports will be uh put this on their list of must do's for the year just trying to get a vision for how that conference would look.

1:05:48 Calvert-White Commissioner of Sports Park and Recreation. Senator, I don't think we need a headliner. It's just planning. Keep in mind these conferences change venues every year. The host is different every year. And most of these events are hosted in the wintertime. Quite frankly, the answer to that is our weather, our beautiful weather is the lure. but we have to have the infrastructure in place to bring the type of numbers that goes to these conferences and the one conference that we're attending in October I mean you're talking about tens of thousands of people that travel to see what is the next best

event to host in their state their city and I think right now we are missing out on some of those dollars sports tourism is a billion dollar industry a year um and we have the weather for that uh we just need to think outside the back there's so many sports that that we won't tap into um the beach volleyball uh a beach soccer beach tennis um those are things that we can host year round uh that would bring people to the territory so um the law for a conference like that i think As I said, if we have the rooms, if we have the infrastructure, once we plan it, I have to look for that people will come.

1:07:11 Okay. And I guess my thinking is in the area of human resources, for example, you have SHRM, the Society for Human Resource Management, and every year they have their big mega conference, and cities around the country compete to get SHRM to do their big expo there in their jurisdiction. You know, in the area of the credit union business, you have NAFQ and cities, Seattle, Washington, Orlando, Florida, these big cities compete to try to get NAFQ to do their conference there. So I'm saying we're not talking about like an association, a national association, or maybe you could correct me.

1:07:58 You're just saying that the U.S. Virgin Islands will be interested in putting together a conference that will be of interest to folks around the country, around the region, around the world. So, you know, I'm saying, am I looking at it in a wrong way, Commissioner? You know, my thinking is that there would be some, there typically is some association that we'll have in politics. You have the council on state government, and they are interested in trying to find where they're going to go next year. So it's a conference with an established group of folks, and every year they do something in a particular city. There's several conferences out there, and you are correct.

1:08:53 It's a bit in war of who gets to host that conference i i think the the good thing for us is again to me the territory and i'm talking about uh you know all three islands it's an easy sell to individuals when you ask people would you rather go to florida go to the u.s origin islands nine times out of ten people put they want to go to the u.s island so it's for us to put it it's on both different conference because block right they move state to state every year but there are certain things that they're going to require that we have in place enough to hold that event i don't think we're there yet thank you commissioner would you like to weigh in on that commissioner henneman sure alany henneman tadman i think what commissioner white is trying to reinforce is that he will go to teams in october and he will meet with a number of representatives who host events and what he'll do is based on what our capacity is in the space and we know we'll have more rooms coming online and more infrastructure will be ready in about two years. Then he will pitch to those people what we have available. So, we may not be able to host a thousand-room conference at St. Thomas without having the Frenchman's and a sugar baby back, but in the next two years, we can host a smaller conference that could easily, we can room 500 people and know that the territory can accommodate that. So, when you go to teams, for example, we always look at the smaller groups. And to be honest, sometimes dealing with a smaller group means that you're dealing with board members, you're dealing with people with higher incomes that are more disposable, that benefit the territory more. So the number game is not always best when you look at groups for the territory and sports because Commissioner White can tell you some of the smaller groups have the biggest investment because their sports they play are on the more upscale side. So I think that's where Commissioner White will shine his knowledge at teams and bring us some conferences that suit the territory gotcha like polo yes

1:11:30 senator james you recognize your point of information thank you chairman for placing that on the record and i'm not i'm gonna say something to do so when i am ready to have my line of questioning but i just want to remind my colleagues that But don't underestimate the power of the U.S. Virgin Islands when it comes to our network. I just want to name a list of individuals who are native Virgin Islanders, and they have a wide network of people you can reach out to and tap into as far as getting them here. Leah Baston, we have Rakeem Christmas, Milton Newton, who is Assistant General Manager of Milwaukee Bucks. We have Victor LeBron and Kevin Krieger who rode in the Kentucky Derby. We have Major Cummins. We have Blaine Claxton who is playing in the NBA right now. Raja Bell. Timothy Duncan. Even though he's no longer with us, Emil Griffith is in the National Boxing Hall of Fame. Commissioner White knows about it in my first term. I went up to New York to see Julian Jackson be inducted into the international boxing hall of fame we also have julian jackson and the list goes on so once we tap into to that base and network we will more than likely be able to tap into that professional network of people and of course if i i fail to mention anyone is because we have so many virgin islanders doing great things in sports so i'm placed on the record thank you very much Senator James, Senator Joseph, you're recognized. No, not Senator Joseph, sorry. Senator Whittaker, you're recognized for your four minutes.

1:13:22 Good morning, Chairman. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning to people of the Virgin Islands. Good morning to our testifiers. I first want to stand out. I commend the sponsor of this measure. important for us to continue you know looking at the strategic approach and more um you know a better approach regulations moving forward and uh so commissioner white one of the questions of course is that you know you and i coalesce a lot um concerning this the sports commission on board um but one do you guys have um regular board meetings you can just put out on the record and then would you also put on the record are there any needed resources you know forces to execute this you have any

sort of budget item information that um you can check the public as to bring this if not moving this so we we started but we had several meetings uh the chair did good job in the uh officers for the board um we did receive the funding for the sports commission hundred thousand dollars uh i was primarily involved in a bank account making sure those funds uh was obligated and available for commission um i think um doing our next meeting we really need to find out that direction we're going uh the chair put that here and let him speak for himself but we haven't had a meeting in several months um i don't know what situation it i was that he relocated off the island of the territory if that is such he probably would need to relate the chair and give it up to some who's here and put in more time um but right now i don't see any obstacles as we have been moving forward thank you for that in terms of the sports commission's

1:15:20 role in working with teams accommodating two minutes what worked on what do you all do to help accommodate you know fans and the person's participating accommodations yeah so so we don't really get into the accommodation with with people coming into the territory for sporting events um i i think the committee assistant commission of tourism can probably more assist that i know they have a team that you know people are looking for hotels they would recommend um they have packages where you know you need to go to eat and transportation but we have not been affiliated or involved with actual travel of any sporting events thank you for that and in terms of implementation and when we speak about revenue uh do you have a lot of engagements with the bureau economic research in order to really provide you know how much we you know how much do we receive in revenue um through the sports tourism as we look at elevating sports sports industry yeah i i don't think that the data for that um is available i don't even know if anyone is tracking these are some of the things as the commission we need to get a hold of how many sporting events we're having in the year what's the return on investment uh how many people are coming into the territory i know tourism have a mechanism that they can uh see visitors coming in but specifically for what's tourism i don't think that data has been created thank you for that and a question for both yourself and commissioner henneman in terms of the education of working with the private education 30 seconds and some of the challenges we see within school base really returning schools to having a lot more sports um in the schools um however you youth yourself and also assistant commissioner henneman have you worked with the department education yeah so so

1:17:10 the makeup of the commission is is that of 13 a 30 member board one of those members is the commissioner of the department of education so uh that individual definitely has input on the policies and the regulations that this board is going to be created that the territory will be following um so uh yes education is involved in the process and and finally in terms of advertising events um so do you um so does commission lean a lot of course on your department you support segregation for advertisement and do you see any increased need for funding to better advertise a lot of and i do commend um a lot of the events are showcased social media and so on and um how do we you know better increase persons who are not on social media ways in which persons will know that games are taking place and advertising our games yeah yeah branding is so important i i think and i've always advocated that there needs to be a separate department between sports park and recreation and tourism um sports tourism department that handle these type of um technology up the media um there's ways to send out blasts on people's phones and texts uh we are in the process of trying to see if we could get several led boards to put in front of some of our bigger stadiums uh dc khanagata emil griffith park to do advertising and then we also have the launch of our new uh website where we try to you know give the public as much information that we have i think one of the issues is while we know what the department is doing we don't necessarily know what the non-profits are doing so there might be a non-profit that's doing a basketball tournament this weekend unless we're really involved or doing sponsorship we don't really have that information so we have to create some type of medium where all the parties that deal with sports could probably generate that information to one place where people can go and see all the information.

1:19:10 Thank you. Chairman, I don't know if my time was called, but I wanted also to ask Commissioner Henneman to speak to the earlier question. Thank you very much, Senator Whitaker. I'll allow Assistant Commissioner Henneman-Todman to respond on the Chair's time. Do you remember Can I have a question? Mm-hmm. Okay. You may proceed. Alan E. Hanna, Department of Tourism. First, let me start by saying, although we have no place where we report return on investment for all events across the board, once the Department of Tourism sponsors a major event, the sponsor is responsible for turning in our report. It's part of our agreement. So all our major sports events turn in at the end of their event a report that shows how many heads on beds and the return on investment to the territory. So we do have that information available internally so that we know what we get the bang for the buck. In terms of, and if I'm not mistaken, you also asked a question pertaining to sports tourism and advertising, it is the department's mandate to advertise for the government.

1:20:30 So if Sports Park and Recreation has a major event, it is our mandate to promote that. Commissioner White and I know we are in a happy medium working on trying to create and brand a sports tourism logo for him. I know it's his baby so we're working on that. Similar to how we have the Division of Festival branded and the Department of Tourism, we are

now in collaboration working on getting a sports tourism brand for Commissioner White and his team to use when they travel and go to different events. Somebody's actively working, and that was the time frame for getting that finalized.

1:21:15 Commissioner White has like 12 texts in my phone where he sends like 13 different logos but we're almost there we're almost there as of last night we are almost there awesome awesome thank you very much for that it's funny you ask that senator because like assistant commissioner said just last night I sent up my final proof of the what I think would be the logo for sports tourism in the territory once the commissioner of tourism sees that logo and approves we will move forward with branding but But if you saw the awesome job that tourism did last weekend in Philadelphia, that is something that we are trying to duplicate with sports tourism. We are in conversation with several people on the mainland that are tearing up the sporting scene. And I'll just call one gentleman name because we do know that we have the drag strip that is set to be open in sometime in October. but mr lenroy cameron who is a st croix native from st croix um who is just tearing up the scene in florida just won another circuit over the weekend uh thanks to tourism and the department of sports park and recreation i am going to be able to issue this young man uh some sponsorship that will assist him uh in in getting his car to run even faster than what he's doing now i think he's running like a he's in a 7.5 section um and as i stated he just won that circuit in orlando over the weekend um seems small to people but people don't realize how big that is for the territory the fact that we are getting ready to open a drag strip and we want people from the mainland from puerto rico from florida to come to the territory he's already representing me doing it on his own and we want to be able to support and help him with that impressive i like that

1:23:14 and no I wasn't I didn't I wasn't aware of what happened in Philadelphia I heard about it miss Henneman Smith didn't and once when Henneman Todd didn't invite me to that activity hopefully next time I'll be able to go point of inquiry Senator Johnson thank you thank you very much mr. chair Commissioner White allude me to max this point of inquiry since we had the topic of sports i want you to briefly tell me what you could tell me about four projects on the island of st croix if we're talking about the sports and sports tourism the frederick said pool horse race track ballpark which is a polished and the car track give me a little bit i want be in trouble i know you've got anything but but me me and the people start if we're talking about sport there's these project and saint roy is very important absolutely absolutely i agree with you um i'll start from the ladder and come back forward so you said the the car track um i was just yesterday i'm doing a site visit the barricades are up um the concession is is fully operating now it does up we got to get a copy and over it uh and we're working with whopper right now to get the lights on the track um i still think going to meet that deadline where we could quit track um so that's that um the horse track uh just yesterday i'm trying to make sure i i give information that i can't just just yesterday we kind of finalized the deal with uh southland came I mean, we've been back with the language for St. Croix. As you know, we were supposed to have some information this week with the idea of the...

1:25:14 Commissioner, Commissioner, I apologize. One thing is to make sure that those get corrected before we can move forward with the deal with them. So I'm still confident that that deal is going to happen. Governor Bryan has been working really hard on that. uh the poly joseph stadium um while i'm in this hearing i saw a report came out from the department of public work uh giving the monthly report of the progress of where that is at i could share that with you senator but that is moving forward i tell people that if you was to go in poly joseph right now just come into the island and i ask you what is air uh you probably won't able to tell it's about field i think by november if i that's important today they'll be able to say commissioner i can see that about field here so we're very confident and with the timeline that is moving forward uh with the paul joseph stadium the vincent mason pool uh that project as you know started a couple months ago once when the contractor decided to start it digging we realized that that pool was sitting on fire i don't think nobody knew that the pool was on files so the new pool design um had to be reconfigured to now accommodate for the piles that is under the pool we had to go back to the drawing board i actually had a meeting with the contractor day this morning that i'm not gonna make because i'm in here with you guys but that is also going to be it it is delayed a little bit because it was an unforeseen uh issue with the piles being But our four of those projects, Senator, are moving forward.

1:26:54 Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much, Senator Johnson. I'd like to recognize committee members, Senator Kenneth L. Gittins, as well as Senator Novell Francis. Welcome, Senators. Senator Carla Joseph, you're recognized for your four minutes. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. A pleasant good day to all my colleagues, as well as the viewing, listening audience, and definitely to the testifiers who are here testifying today. I want to begin first by commending our prodigal son, a young millennial, on the foresight of putting together and coming forward and bringing forward Bill No. 34-0233 relative to the Virgin Islands Sports Commission. I just want to ask just a few questions, just as a piggyback on a question asked by our secretary relative to returns on these types of activities.

1:28:17 Assistant Commissioner, I noted in your testimony from the Department of Tourism that you outlined several activities that the department has sponsored, and you also testified that you do keep track of those items, those activities. Would you be able to provide some of the data that you have garnered over the years to the committee chair so we could see the

actual weight of having these sporting events? Because I think that would add a level of confidence in us knowing that these sporting events going towards sports tourism is a viable avenue for us to diversify our economy. And I know Department of Tourism has also sponsored Paradise Jam in the past. So if you could provide some of that data to the chair for us so we could see how much money came in, how much, as you had mentioned in your previous testimony and responses, how many beds were filled. And I'm sure this is going to be all post-2017 hurricane. I don't know if we, do we have a, I don't recall if we had a Paradise Jam after the hurricanes. I think we may have. We may have had one or two.

1:29:43 So that would give us at least some data to be able to discern the real effectiveness of this type of tourism, which I'm sure is very effective. We do have a lot of people and a lot of interest. Now, Commissioner, I wanted to just tap on to you looking at the composition of the sport commission. I noted that the Virgin Islands Olympic Committee Chairman is also a member of the Sport Commission, correct?

1:30:20 And there is underway to build a full sport complex, especially in the Island District of St. Thomas and St. John. How are we looking with that? Because we want to encourage sport tourism, but we also want to be realistic in knowing that we need to have a time frame to actually have these areas in place to actually have some sporting events rather than just UVI. So tell me, what is the overall arching plan to get some of these sport facilities up and running? I don't need to know about Paulie Joseph. We all received the report from the Commissioner of Public Works.

1:31:16 So I don't need to know about that status. But tell me, what's that overall projection and how you're looking and the plan? Caldwell White, Commissioner of Sports Park and Recreation. So, I was tasked with doing a site utilization plan at the Nazareth property. That plant has been completed, I think, in the last month. So that report is given to the Olympic Committee, we are going to start the next phase, which is actually getting designed for the different facilities that we want out there. is going to be packed by several different sporting entities uh the soccer federation soccer association sorry the cricket association uh 30 seconds and obviously the the sports conflict by the olympic committee uh each one of those members would be responsible for their particular plot at their facility so they would have to speak on the timeline of when they're going to do that uh the legislature was gracious to give us uh some funding for a cricket field on the island of st croix um as those monies is received i will be working with the twin city cricket association uh as far as those funds can move forward with that and then just as recent as last week there's been talks about putting a volleyball pitch um uh out on the eastern end of the island at kramer's park where we can host um international and local volleyball beach volleyball tournaments commissioner from time to time when you're speaking you at least earlier in your conversation you

1:33:05 you were coming out a little broken up i think we were able to gather what you're saying i don't know if it's you speaking into the mic or if it's an issue um from a media perspective but i think we were able to gather the essence of what you were communicating to us. Senator, I'll give you an opportunity to wrap up. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for your graciousness. I just wanted to ask the Commissioner, you said a lot. Do you have like a project schedule, project worksheet with all of these different entities and different sports that you're looking at putting some firm numbers and timelines to get things completed because we really want to support I'm going to be supporting this legislation that's not a problem but to actually see the action happening is what I'm concerned about yes and it's so my main role is going to be dispersing the funds again these in the entities that the funds are going to be awarded to obviously when they go to property and procurement, they're going to have to have some type of project plan of the facility that they're going to be built. Because we have not reached that part yet, I do not have a project plan or timeline of when either one of these facilities are going to be completed. I can assure you that as the funds is given to Sports Park and Recreation, we will work with all the entities to ensure that they have access to those. Okay, thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for the leeway, and thank you, Commissioner White and Assistant Commissioner Henneman Tadmá for your testimony. And please be sure to send the information to us so we could actually see the returns. Thank you.

1:34:58 Thank you very much, Senator Joseph. Senator Francis, you're recognized for your four minutes. Mic check, one, two. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good morning to you. good morning to my colleagues good morning to the people of the version of course good morning or testifiers here to the commissioner board assistant commissioner handyman todd and of course we're having this discussion about um sports tourism which continue to be a buzzword around the for example but i think that there are some serious opportunities my apologies for being a little bit late this morning i also attended the governor's um conference with the caribbean this morning over the university and so towards up the buzz buzz for today uh i also want to extend congratulations of course to mr cameron um my cousin is cynthia francis this is um auntie who's sitting in the back of the room here i'm sure francis as well um you know very proud of what he's doing there and you don't let me forget you get i get to see all of the the winnings i don't know i don't ever get to see when he when he loses right but i get to see when he wins all the time so all the procedures winner um so commissioner i was certainly pleased with the announcement this morning on um underneath in respect paulie joseph stadium and opening of

the paulie joseph that yeah and um in tracking the project set um which we did the even cut some time back and these things pop up fortunately and um i i that's a little bit of this setback there and but i'm hoping that under your watch oh i know under your watch that you will

1:36:49 continue to make sure that these projects move out so there's some a little bit resolution in in knowing that what about this bill that that gives you reason for pause i mean are you in full support of this uh measure that's before us today and it's opportunity to um certainly come in the two minutes james senior in presentation of this bill is there anything about this bill that that um give you a reason for pause no no senator uh i i have no objections to any of the amendments um you know i i like that the senator brought it forward i think it's my duty to to make sports tourism in the territory bigger than what it is right now i don't think we have quite touched the surface of what we could bring to the territory um but we're going to continue pushing to do so and funding of course is always the fundamental issue in respect to moving tourism to the level that you would like to see it go um you know can you can you um tell me i know that we just went through the budget review and um but do you believe that you have adequate a budget to be able to effectively and efficiently run um you know the sports park and recreation i'm not trying to put you on a spot or to run support tourism product your vision i know that beyond beyond what is written on paper what is expected of you you have a vision um for moving sports park on terror and um forward you you know senator we could always use more um i think we're on the right track though um you know somebody told me the other day that this department used to have over 200 employees fast um barely breaking a little bit over 100 now so that just 30 seconds for this department depleted um over the years but we're starting to to now increase those numbers uh thanks to the governor and the legislature you know i i rarely come before this body and say that i need something my department needs something and this body don't try to assist me in it so i i know that everybody is um for sports in the territory um as i as we could see the help that we have been getting for the legislature um but as as things come in and we need more stuff equipment uh personnel um employees

1:39:14 uh you can be assured that i'm going to access legislature for very well thank you for that and i don't know if people understand the gravity of responsibility when we talk about having a sports um conference here in the virgin isles i was um integral in the summer training camp um when timothy duncan came to um the virgin isles came to st thomas some years ago um of course in my capacity as the territorial chief of police and it was a tremendous lift from it you know there's nothing light about you know having a conference i think beyond you know just having all of these um professionals you know throughout the territory we got make sure that they're secured make sure that they have adequate facilities make sure that we have you know staff enough to accommodate even their staff the trainers and everyone else uh can you just talk a little bit in terms of your involvement in the engagement of even this discussion in respect to you know conferences of that type of magnitude yeah so i think the conference that we're going to be attending in october is the premier you know sporting event conference it's called teams um like i said thousands and thousands of event uh promoters and you're talking about everything from from water sports uh to boxing you name it any type of sport you're going to see these individuals at this conference um we started going i think the first year was in 2016 again thanks to tourism because they've always been supportive of this department uh going to that conference uh just to get breakback ideas uh you know best practices in the industry and then start tapping in in some of the sports that we know that we can house i think uh assistant commissioner hennyman was a little generous when she talked about what you know events like like like um paradise jam does i think their their their math is for every dollar they spend they

1:41:12 look to get back three dollars from the consumer paradise jam i think the last time we checked was bringing in six to one um so that just tells you what we could do as far as the territory when we really promote and market the events here in the territory in terms of your vision um mr chair i don't know if my time was called um your time was called but you can wrap up sports that you're looking at outside of the conventionals um you know uh skateboarding for example you have come to mind roller skating is there anything else outside of the conventional that you're looking and seeking to pursue you know what and you might be reading my emails but um we we the skating community is very big in in the virgin islands um you know i get emails all the time you know commissioner we need property to put up our ramps and whatnot uh we decided uh with the blessing of the governor that the property out at freedom hoy uh used to be a ballpark hasn't been used as a ball field um in years as a matter of fact i don't remember ever being used as a ball field i know we did some cricket out there we did some football but our plan is to go to the federal government fema because we did receive some funds for that and uh ask for justification to use the funds to turn that facility into a pump track now what a track is is the the dunes where you see the skateboarding and the roller roller bikes and stuff uh going in and out uh we've already started uh getting plans and design for that pump track but if that's something that we could actually put on the territory now could bring uh you know skateboard events biking events um but we're also looking to do something like that on the island of st croix the property where they do the archery uh and on the western island would be ideal to put a skate park so we we are working on it and hopefully it'll come to fruition very well thank you thank you very much again um for

your foot rightness i'll tell you that i can't wait where you know health is well and we'll talk about

- 1:43:18 sports tourism i really want us to expand the conversation about you know um heritage trails and um you know walkability um you know um cycling and all that that's involved in best life um you know promotion and really get our community um healthier i also i'm very much your time was called discussion thank you very much for your responses thank you very much mr chair for the senator if i may um you know we we started the our best life initiative uh we've only run two events so far which was the walk out wednesdays and and now we're doing a program for seniors and twosies and thursdays both programs have been very successful as a matter of fact we didn't even think we would have had the amount of people coming out for that um so the the team the team at the department sports park and recreation office of the governor we have a lot more events planned just to get people out get them fit um it is going to include you know bike riding um i think on st croix is starting getting ready to start a zumba program uh soca aerobics um so we're going to do and then we're just thinking outside the box anything that's going to be fun for the community to get them out and get them exercising we're going to be promoting within the next year thank you very much commissioner uh senator whittaker you're recognized for your point of information thank you chairman just why we have point of information i will be reaching out to commissioner commissioner white because actually one of the things that i'm pushing for is for us to have a more regular information being shared about the plans for redevelopments and so it's really legislation to address a more strategic approach so that we don't have to always wait for emails or hearings we could have at least a regular interval of receiving updates on the status of projects as you know the committee is always asking about the status of projects so i look forward to reaching out to you getting your insight and expert opinion and to move that legislation forward thank you so it would you talk about fema projects does projects general in general mostly our local projects yeah thank you thank you very much senator whittaker senator jayvan james you're recognized for your four minutes
- 1:45:45 good afternoon good morning to the people of the u.s virgin islands thank you mr chair for the time Today is a great day in the U.S. Virgin Islands. When I woke up this morning, I was scrolling on my timeline and I saw the post from Lenroy Cameron, and I always look forward to his post. I just want to say congratulations to him and Miss Naira Thomas and the entire family for representing the U.S. Virgin Islands in those drag racing competitions on the U.S. mainland. Colleagues, we are not reinventing the wheel with this bill. We are basically making the wheel better.
- 1:46:23 Every year, this body appropriates approximately \$1 million specifically for sports tourism in the United States Virgin Islands. One organization who have benefited the most from that appropriation, of course, you know, is Paradise Jam. And I want to salute him for all these years of choosing the beautiful U.S. Virgin Islands to host those basketball games. But before I get into my talking points, I want to highlight two other organizations who are doing great things in the Virgin Islands specifically for sports and that's LiveWire Sports and 340-365 Athletics. They do a good job at covering the live games and what have you so for individuals who cannot make it to their son's basketball game or their daughter's basketball game they can at least watch it from their phone using Facebook. Most recently, I met with Ms. Gillian Constable, who is a sports event manager in West Palm Beach, Florida. I met with her about two weeks ago. She's a native virgin and raised in the end of St. Croix, who's doing great things in Palm Beach County for the sports commission. And we shared our vision. She came down here. She met me on Facebook. She met me in my office and she said that she's happy of all the things that the office of Senator Javon James has been implementing. So in addition to that, I just want to say thank you to my colleagues for supporting all of my initiatives that I've brought to the floor thus far because there's no I in team.
- 1:48:01 As far as the bill that is before us, it's a no-brainer. It's going to generate revenues for this territory, and it's definitely going to highlight the talent and the intellect and our infrastructure and the many things we have to offer once we work together. There is no need to put raising funds in the bill because Title 3, Virgin Islands Code, Section 3, 1, 8, speaks to the financial accountability of the VI Sports Commission. And it says, the commission shall institute a system of financial accountability and expedentials for the development of sports and recreation in the territory. The commission shall assume a leadership role in identifying and seeking financial support for sports and recreation programs from the federal government, the Virgin Islands government, the public and private sector. They are tasked with the responsibility of collaborating with sports organizations and to coordinate their plans to undertake fundraising programs, identifying sports that have high potential as viable economic opportunities for the territory.
- 1:49:21 And lastly, it says the Commission of the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation shall administer the monies received by the Commission either through appropriations from the legislature of the Virgin Islands, donations, or through fundraisers by the Commission to fund the activities of the Commission. So there is a financial accountability and component of the Virgin Islands Sports Commission. And it also says in Title 3, Section 323, all departments, agencies, and instrumentalities of the government of the Virgin Islands shall cooperate with the commission in implementing the Virgin Islands Sports Policy. We have an obligation to make sure that the things that are mandated by

the V.I. Sports Commission comes into fruition.

- 1:50:11 Let's make it happen. I'm asking for your support, colleagues. Thank you for the time. Thank you very much, Senator James. I have a quick question for Assistant Commissioner Todman with respect to who do you see as our biggest competitors in the sports tourism market, I guess, from a regional standpoint. standpoint of course if you look at our natural competitors in the Caribbean off the bat you'll see Bahamas the Dominican Republic St. Martin Puerto Rico all within the area that has accommodations to secure major events because they have the rooms to accommodate them so those would be just off the top of my head the top four within the proximity within the Caribbean is there room for like collaborations or is that a no-no uh collaborations with these competitors i see the Bahamas or Puerto Rico in initiatives like this there's always room for collaboration but i would honestly say due to coven you know everybody is trying to scramble for what they can regain in the market right now. For us, our nearest neighbor would probably be the BVI, so if we're looking at a collaboration, it would be easier for us to look at doing something with the BVI, and I would probably say the marine sector would be the best bet for that one.
- 1:51:54 Thank you very much. Senator James, you recognize your point of information? Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the point of information. I failed to mention while I was doing my line of questioning the importance of the Virgin Islands government negotiating with Seaborn and bringing in other competition to reduce the cost for inter-island travel. I want to say thank you to Mr. Mosler. I know he has a theory. I know they have other discussions as far as the Virgin Islands government using some of the ARPA funds, if I'm not mistaken. to get an additional ferry, but inter-island travel is very important until we can get the sports conference to the level where we want it to be, because our brothers and sisters from the BVI, Puerto Rico, they can come over and they have family members, they can stick up in the living room or in the extra bedroom in the meantime until we get our hotel capacity up and running to where we want it to be, so I just want to place that on the record.
- 1:52:57 Thank you very much, Senator. colleagues i think we've exhausted our round of questioning on this bill do i have a motion at this time amendment committee on rules and judiciary stands in recess for two minutes We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back.
- 1:54:59 The Committee on Rules and Judiciary is back on the record. Do we hear an amendment? Senator Bolquez, you are recognized for your amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move to amend Bill No. 340233, An act amending Title III, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 18, Subchapter 2, Section 312 relating to the members of the VI Sports Commission, and Sections 313 and 314 relating to the duties of the VI Sports Commission.
- 1:55:42 The amendment is as follows. A, Page 1, Line 9, B, Striking 5, and Inserting 7. Subsection B, page 2, line 5, by striking raised funds and capitalizing the initial letter of include and C, page 2, line 7, by striking June through September and inserting October through December. I so move.
- 1:56:16 Second. Second. Properly moved by Senator Bulquez. Seconded by Senator Joseph and Senator Johnson and Senator Whitaker and Senator Francis. Hearing no objections? So ordered. Do I have an amendment? Motion. Motion. Senator Bulquez, you're recognized for your motion. Mr. Chair, I move that Bill number 340233 as amended and an act amending Title III Virgin Islands Code Chapter 18 Subchapter 2 Section 312 relating to the members of the VI Sports Commission and Sections 313 and 314 relating to the duties of the VI Sports Commission be favorably voted upon in this committee and reported out of this committee and forwarded to the full body for further consideration and action.
- 1:57:12 i so move properly moved by senator bolquez seconded by senator joseph roll call on bill number 34.0233 as amended senator angel bolquez jr senator bolquez yay senator novel e francis junior yeah senator francis yay senator kenneth l gittins yes senator gittins yay senator franklin d johnson yay senator johnson yay senator carla j joseph senator joseph yay senator milton e potter yes senator potter yay senator genevieve r whitaker yay senator whitaker yay mr chair we have seven yay thank you very much madam chair colleagues bill number 34.0233 an act amending title 3 virgin islands code chapter 18 sub chapter 2 section 312 relating to the members of the virgin island sports commission and sections 313 and 314 relating to the duties of the virgin island sports commission as amended has been favorably considered by the committee on rules and judiciary and will be forwarded to the full body for further consideration senator james you recognize for your point of personal privilege thank you mr chair for the time and i want to say a special thank you to the center at large for offering this bill on my behalf because I'm not a member of this committee. I just want to say thank you to my colleagues, thank you to Commissioner White, thank you to the Department of Tourism and the Brian Roach Administration for working hand-in-hand with the Office of Senator Jovan James regarding the sports tourism industry. And in closing, I just want to say as we hear about the negative stuff, let's focus on the positive things that are happening Because of this body, \$2.1 million will be going to a cricket field for the island of St. Croix and one will be going to the island of St. Thomas. We have a FIFA stadium and the island of St. Croix recognized internationally. We have the car track that is coming, \$1.1 million

- 1:59:37 because of this body. Pauley-Josie Stadium, an additional \$8 million because of this body. the construction of a multi-power sports complex at the University of the Virgin Islands and St. Croix from the Community Development Block Grant, and a total of \$42 million. It is in progress. And last but not least, for the doubters, Haas Racing will be back on St. Croix. Stay tuned. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the time. Thank you very much, Senator James. Colleagues, we have exhausted all testimonies regarding this bill. I'm going to ask Commissioner White and Assistant Commissioner Henneman Toddman to provide us with their, just a quick 30 minute wrap up. 30 seconds, not 30 minutes. Commissioner White, I know you can do it in 30 minutes, but we're asking you to do it in 30 seconds.
- 2:00:42 Senator Fata, thank you for the time to come here and testify on the bill. We have a long way to go in sports tourism, but I feel that we're moving in the right direction. Since 2016, I have been advocating for a division specifically for sports tourism, kind of like what you see at the division of festivals. there needs to be three to four individuals that does primarily their job is to bring in sporting events to the territory and bring revenue to the territory um i'll piggyback on a little more and i apologize because i'm not going over time but i went to one of his events earlier in the year in london and he was the minority at the the draft strip and it took me about three seconds once i got to the facility to find uh where this young man was and for that was the large enormous virgin islands flock that he had fired um and he's doing so without any support uh or any financial support uh from the government um again i want to thank tourism and with me to ensure that we get this young man some assistance uh he's going to do some great thing he is also um assisting with getting me some some equipment because we want to start back the joint draft in program on the action of saint croix uh it is my uh intention to bring at least two draft racers here for junior drag racers have already started the procurement those vehicle he's assisting me with that but if we're going to take sports tourism serious we need to get individuals that their five is dedicated to promoting sports tourism territory and work to assure that happens thank you again thank you very much commissioner uh assistant commissioner henneman tadman i'm not not gonna say Smith. You may proceed with your 30 seconds. It's still good morning. Good morning
- 2:02:53 everyone. Alan E. Hanuman Talman, Department of Tourism. I'm going to stay to the 30 second mark and just say that the Department of Tourism stands ready to market and advertise and promote sports tourism. It's not easy as Commissioner White said but it is a partnership between the public and private sector being led by the government. And we will make sure to meet the mandate of the people. So we look forward to, you know, whatever new projects we have on the horizon and to continue supporting all of the ones that we have on the table before us. Thank you.
- 2:03:30 Thank you very much, Ms. Sandeman. Toddman, colleagues, the Committee on Rules and Judiciary will stand and recess for five minutes. We'll see you next time. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. I love you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Colleagues, good morning.
- 2:20:09 The Committee on Rules and Judiciary is back on the record. Madam Clerk, can you please read the agenda for Block No. 2? Yes, Mr. Chair, Block 2. The Committee on Rules and Judiciary will discuss potential changes to the election laws of the Virgin Islands. Invited testifiers, Carolyn Fox, Virgin Islands Supervisor of Elections, Gwen Molyneux, League of Women Voters. That concludes the reading of Block 2, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much.
- 2:20:50 Did you say Supervisor Carolyn Fox? Mm-hmm. Did you mention it? Okay. Okay. Awesome. Colleagues, we're honored to have Supervisor of Elections, Carolyn Fox, before us today. Madam Supervisor, welcome. have several proposed amendments to the Virgin Islands Code regarding the election system that we are going to be discussing today or we're not going to be voting on any issues so to speak but this is a opportunity for us to take a look at some cleanup items that may come before us sometime in the very near future in the form of amendments so this will be an opportunity for us to get the supervisor of elections, Supervisor Fox, to offer her thoughts on a number of amendments that are going to be before us today. Senator Kenneth Gittins from the St. Cory District was the author of these amendments. I know he's worked closely with Supervisor Fox over over the past several weeks and months. Madam supervisor you may please proceed with your testimony good good morning and we are i'm happy to be here good morning honorable chairman milton e potter distinguished members pardon the eruption as the chair i didn't get to do my introduction Senator, I know that we were not going to be hearing any specific bills per se, so I thought we were going to forego the introduction of the eight or nine amendments that will be included for discussion today.
- 2:22:45 No, sir. The procedure still remains the same. Senator, I don't know if the procedure still remains the same, but I will give you the opportunity to go ahead and proceed with your introduction. Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, sometimes we just have to show the way, but thank you for the opportunity. the last few months as you've stated and i may say uh over the last couple of years as well because we've done this uh previously but not completed my staff and i have been

working alongside the election system uh through the office of supervisor at the board members if you the virginal school specifically type 15 which speaks to the elections process senator we're having some challenges hearing you we're having some challenges hearing you uh to this section i will lead the discussion today on approximately uh 10 amendments that seeks to revise existing laws the election system and the league of women voters have accepted our invitation today from you mr chairman uh to be here today so we're looking forward to that discussion i will be discussing uh amendments that will seek to clear up language that will reflect one board of elections uh which we have done in past legislature but the code still has areas that still speaks to each board or two boards uh of elections uh it will also reflect

2:24:37 that employees of the election system are under the direct supervision and authority of the supervisor of elections rather than the board of elections also you'll see uh changes that's being discussed uh changing some dates uh to regarding the publications of for listing all pertinent dates and filing deadlines uh during an election year and adding language that would speak to the preservation and maintenance of registers and issuance of certificates of appointees uh we will also see uh a discussion one of the final discussions will be uh on establishing a voter registration at the bureau of the motor vehicles so uh mr chair i'll just cut it short here and we can hear from uh supervisor thank you for the time to introduce uh these brs again uh companies you should have br numbers 34-319 uh 34-320 34-321 34-322 34-323 34-460 34-461 34-462 and 34-457 and i must thank the uh senator large for pointing out that one uh era where we had left off uh an insertion however the discussion will discuss that the rest that was already this legal counsel and they're making the questions thank you mr chair

2:26:39 thank you very much senator gettens for leading the way supervisor fox you may now proceed with your testimony good morning honorable chairman milton e potter distinguished members of the committee and rules and judiciary other members of the 34th legislature members of the press the viewing and listening audience i am caroline fox supervisor of elections, of the election systems of the Virgin Islands. It is an honor to prepare before you today to present on draft bills 34-319, 34-320, 34-321, 34-322, 34-323, 34-457, 34-460, 34-461, and 34-462.

2:27:43 First, I'd like to compliment this body, all members of the 34th Legislature, for unanimously supporting the two bills passed and signed by Governor Bryan on August 8th, allowing any registered voter to request an absentee ballot without citing a reason and the maintenance of voter registration database by communicating with voters who has not voted in a two- and four-year period to ascertain their status. The election systems of the Virgin Islands has mounted an educational campaign and will be posting the inactive voter listing by the beginning of October. The election system of the Virgin Islands has worked tirelessly and continues to submit proposed revisions to Title 18 of the Virgin Islands Code with input from the public and other organizations. However, we need the legislature to seriously look at total election reform. In the past, only certain sections of the code would be amended. There are numerous sections in Title 18 that conflicts with other sections in title 18 and other sections that no longer apply due to the advancement in technology.

2:29:13 In 2015, Senator Gittins alongside other members of the 31st legislature of the Virgin Islands met with the board members and staff of the election system and reviewed title 18 in its entirety with the intent of revising the whole of title 18. However, only certain sections along with some cosmetics in wording were passed which included created a unified board of elections. Today, I sit in front of members of the 34th legislature through the Committee of Rules and Registry once again pleading for this body to pass these amendments to Title 18.

2:30:07 Like famous astronaut Neil Armstrong stated, that's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind. Today we take these small steps. Over the last four years, the election system of the Virgin Islands has been collaborating with Senator Kenneth Giddensary and his staff on election reform. The election system reviewed from Chapter 1 to Chapter 5, and we are in support of all proposed amendments.

2:30:45 of the 34th legislator and the public may ask, why amend Virgin Islands Code Title 18 election laws now in an election cycle? We have been working on some of these elections reform for years and whenever new legislators are elected we have to start all over. In addition, it seems as the best time to address the reform measures is in an election year when we are mandated to not enact any election laws six months prior to the general election. As we have stated for years, Virgin Islands Code, Title 18, is outdated and ambiguous.

2:31:37 We must begin this lengthy, painstaking process. Title 18 consists of 17 chapters. Any amendments passed today should have an effective date of February 20th, 2023. We are grateful and happy that today we are addressing at least nine measures. We support Bill No. 34319, the amendment of Chapter 1, Section 4, subsection A, by striking the term joint boards wherever it appears and inserting board through Title 18, throughout, sorry.

2:32:24 In subsection B, the following amendments are delineated in paragraph 4 by striking primaries and in paragraph 5 by striking cards and binders. And striking, in quote, and for the conduct and determination of the results of primaries and election, and after consultation with boards and with the approval of boards, an electric voting machine, sample ballots,

and instruction for voters to be used at primaries and elections, end quote. 3, in paragraph 8, by striking joint boards.

- 2:33:07 In paragraph 9, by striking June and inserting March. Paragraph 10, strike 15 and insert 30. In paragraph 11, by striking the word cards where it appears, both capitalized and lowercase. Number 7, by striking boards wherever it appears in section and inserting board in its place. And number 8, by striking in quotes and at the end of paragraph 9, replacing the period at the end of paragraph 10 with a semicolon and adding paragraphs 12 through 18 to read as follows. Twelve, perform all functions with respect to registration and party enrollment of electors within its election district, as vested in it by this title.
- 2:34:09 Thirteen, preserve, store, and maintain registers and election equipment of all kinds, including ballot boxes and any equipment used in voting. 14 issue certificates of appointments to election officers and clerks 15 prepare posts and publish in a manner provided by law all notices and advertisements in connection with the registration of electors and conduct and the conduct of elections which may be required by law number 16 receive from election officers the returns of all elections, canvass and compute the returns, and certify no later than 15 days following the election. 17, prepare and submit an annual budget report to the board in the form prescribed by the board, which shall contain a statement of number of electors registered and those enrolled according to party affiliation as of June 30th. In 2018, the supervisor of elections during or in an event of a state of emergency, national or man-made disaster, or extreme inclement weather, shall consult and collaborate with the Board of Elections in order to jointly adapt rules and regulations, setting forth the particulars for the exercise of the emergency powers granted herein." As is done nation and territory wide, the duties of preparation, deployment, execution and redeployment of an election falls under the Secretary of State, Supervisor or the Director
- 2:36:03 of Elections. This amendment deletes all the applicable sections from under the Board of Elections purview and places them under the Supervisor of Elections. As it is with many Boards of Elections or Commissioners of Elections, their responsibilities are the canvassing and certification of the election results to the Secretary of State, Supervisor, or Director of Elections. This provides a practical process and segregates the specific duties.
- 2:36:40 This amendment is derived from deleting due sections under the Board of Elections, Section 47 and placing them under the supervisor of election in section 4. The paragraph and numbers are 12 to 18. Bill number 34-320 chapter 2 section 1 is amended by adding a new appropriately numbered section to read as follows title 18 virgin islands code chapter 2 section 21 is amended in subsection b by striking come quotes by the joint board of elections end quote and after quote separate striking and the ballot quote and inserting contest in quote bill number 34 321 chapter 2 2 amendment section 21 is amended by adding a new appropriately numbered section to read as follows. Section 45 is amended in subsection A in the first sentence by striking the word in quotes each and inserting the in quotes.
- 2:37:56 point of information point of information senator this is unusual to ask for a point of information in the middle of a testimony mr mr chair a lot of things are unusual i'm just trying to uh so for the for the record can you let the supervisor know rather than referring to them as bills uh it's uh br the numbers that she's reading are not bills i just don't want the record to be uh misconstrued it's br34320 br34321 etc but she's reading it as bill i don't want the the uh audience to be confused thank you thank you senator Please recognize Senator Joseph's microphone.
- 2:38:59 Just a point of information, Mr. Chairman. I think it would be beneficial for the supervisor to refer to them as the amendment number because they are offered as amendment and they have the assigned number. So instead of saying BR, because they are clearly amendment number, just to add what the sponsor has mentioned, amendment numbers. Amendment number 34-320, et cetera. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Senator Joseph. Are you privy to those amendment numbers? Yes.
- 2:39:37 Okay, you may proceed. So here we are now at amendment number 34-322, chapter 3, section 46, is amended by striking a phrase, in quotes, the supervisor of elections and each board of elections with end quotes. Amendment number 34-323, Chapter 3, Section 41, is amended by adding a new appropriate number section to read Subsection G by striking \$75 and inserting \$100, and by striking \$125 and inserting \$150. This applies to the board members' stipend. I would also support an amendment to Chapter 7, Section 158, Compensation of Election Officers and Clerks, increasing the poll worker stipends as follows.
- 2:40:36 judge from 150 to 250, facilitator from 135 to 235, inspector from 125 to 225, a clerk from 100 to 200, a voting machine monitor from 100 to 200, the lead voting technician from 250 to 350, and the voting technician from \$150 to \$250.
- 2:41:09 Each instructional meeting from \$20 to \$40 and each shift after 6 p.m. from \$10 to \$25. Amendment number 34-457, Title 18, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 3, Section 94 is amended by adding subsection D, E, and F that read as follows. Notwithstanding subsection A, the Director of Bureau of Motor Vehicles in conjunction with the Supervisor of Elections shall designate an employee in each district as a registrar.

- 2:41:52 The Supervisor of Elections or the Supervisor's designee shall train the designated employees regarding the duties and responsibilities of a registrar. The employees designated as registrars must meet the requirements set forth in subsection B. To the extent possible, the employees must be fluent in both Spanish and English. The language in this section will be collaborated with, will be revised, sorry I just read what's here, the The language in this section will be revised. C, notwithstanding subsection A, persons may register to vote at the Bureau of Motor Vehicle only during the hours the Bureau of Motor Vehicle is open to the public, except during the period of 30 days immediately preceding and five days immediately following each election. The Bureau of Motor Vehicle shall post a placard at its main entrances in a position easily visible to the public, indicating that persons may ready to vote at the Bureau. The placard must also list the documents that the person must present when registering to vote.
- 2:43:11 Amendment number 34-460, Title 18, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 3, Section 55, is amended as follows, subsection A is amended by striking or primary and of the district where they appear in the first instant, and subsection B is amended by striking A where it appears after proceeding and inserting the and by striking a primary or and inserting and an amendment number 34 461 title 18 virgin islands code chapter 3 section 56 is amended by striking member of the boards of elections may act at any time as inspectors and when so acting and inserting any member of the board of elections may inspect the records of voter registration but any removal of information, including making copies, must be approved by a majority of the members of the board at a meeting that has a quorum present, when inspecting the records of voter registration, a member, and then its end quote. Amendment 34-462, Title 18, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 3, is amended as follows. a section 57 is amended in quotes and a word where it first appears and inserting a comma and by inserting in quotes and the supervisor of elections in quotes after the registration and b section 58 is amended by striking a board of elections and inserting the virgin islands elections system. Some other election laws I recommend we address in a timely
- 2:45:23 manner are as follows. We need to add or revise the definitions in Chapter 1, General Provisions, Section 1, to add the following election terms. Runoff election, which is a continuation of the general election, considered a second election. It is held if top vote getting candidate in a first election, the general election did not achieve the minimum percentage of votes required to declare victory. Next, initiative. The initiative process allows citizens to propose a new statute or constitutional amendment. In political terminology the initiative is a process that enables citizens to bypass the state legislature by placing proposed statutes and in some states constitutional amendments on the ballot there are two types of initiatives direct and indirect in the direct process proposals that qualify go directly on the ballot In the indirect process, the proposal is submitted to the legislature, the legislature can approve the proposed measure or a similar one, in which case it is unnecessary for the measure to go under ballot for voters to consider. Next, referendum.
- 2:46:57 The referendum process allows citizens to refer a law that passed the legislature to the ballot for voters to decide whether to uphold or repeal the law. Referendum is a general term which refers to a measure that appears on the ballot. There are two primary types of referenda. The Legislature Referendum, whereby the Legislature refers a measure to the voters for their approval, And the popular referendum, a measure that appears on the ballot as a result of a voter petition drive.
- 2:47:35 The popular referendum is similar to an initiative in that both are triggered by petitions, but they are significant differences. The popular referendum is a device which allows voters to approve or repeal an act of the legislature. If the legislature passes a law that the voters do not approve of, they may gather signatures to demand a popular vote under law. Recall is a procedure that allows citizens to remove and replace a public official before the end of a term of office. Recall differs from another method for removing officials from office.
- 2:48:19 is a political device while impeachment is a legal process recount an election recount is typically ordered or requested when a margin of victory in an election is extremely small or when people believe that the election may have been dishonest as a rule only one recount election will be allowed from any candidate. Again, recount, an election recount is a process which voters cast in an election are re-tabulated to verify the accuracy of the original results. An election recount is a process in which voters cast in an election are re-tabulated to verify the accuracy of the original results. Re-counts typically occur in the event of a close margin of victory following accusations of election fraud or due to the possibility of administrative errors. Two other measures that need to be addressed in the Virgin Islands Code Title 18. First, that the governor and the lieutenant governor should come from each district. And secondly, no one with a felony can run for the following offices, governor, lieutenant governor, nor delegate enact these two laws to cement them these measures must be black and white the days of the gentleman agreement is outdated we need to codify laws in title 18 areas with a revised organic act of 1954 is silent on february 28 2023 which is one of the dates are utilized the election system of the virgin islands will be 60 years old this esteem agency
- 2:50:13 the election system of the virgin islands will be celebrating our diamond jubilee in grand virgin islands fashion with events on the three islands where we have election offices the office of the supervisor and the board of election roles having progressively changed would be significant if these two measures are enacted on February 20th to commemorate

this milestone in history. We will be able to look back years from now with astonishment of the new era of the election system of the virgin islands and exhale and cheer on the great accomplishments i would like to take this opportunity to inform the public and upcoming events from the 2022 elections calendar two days ago september 6 was the first day for receipt by the supervisor of elections of applications for absentee ballots for the general election. September 12th which is Monday 3 p.m. via MS teams the board of elections will meet to review and approve the general election ballot then the sample ballot will be ready. September 24th all federal ballots to be mailed out to military and overseas personnel. October 1st, election exposition on St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix.

2:51:51 This exposition will feature speakers encouraging persons to participate and vote, organization and nonprofits displaying their products and services, free duplicate voter identification cards and entertainment any organization interested in participating please reach out to our offices october 3rd testing of the electronic voting machines and tabulating equipment for the early voting period certification by the board and is open to the general public and the media october 9th the last day for registration october 10th through the 31st early voting on saint thomas at the election systems office and tutu park mall on saint john at the election systems office announcing croix at the election system office and st joseph hospitality suite the reason for the changes on st thomas and st john school is now in session therefore the spaces are not available for 22 days we are confident early voting participation will be record-breaking november 8th general election and if there's a runoff, it will happen on November 22nd as per the Revised Organic Act of 1954, 14 days after the general election. Funded will be required to execute this election in the amount of \$325,000. In conclusion, the election system of the Virgin

2:53:47 Island supports all the proposed amendments for amendment number 34-0319, 34-0320, 34-0321, 34-0322, 34-0323, 34-457, 34-460, 34-461, and 34-462, with an effective date of February 20th, 2023. I would like to repeat this plea which I've been saying since 2013. The Virgin Islands elections laws are outdated and ambiguous. Therefore, I look forward to returning to this body to testify and other electoral bills in for legal review. I will close with this quote. progress is impossible without changes and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything. George Bernard Shaw. Mr. Chairman I thank you members of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary and other members of the 34th Legislature for inviting me to present on the amended bills all of which we support and prepared to respond to any questions you may have. Your voice is your vote, and your vote is your voice. Thank you. Thank you very much, Supervisor Fox. Madam Clerk, is there a testimony from the League of Women Voters, Dr. Gwen Marie Molina? Yes, Mr. Chair. Can you please read it into the

2:55:48 record. Thanks. Okay. League of Women Voters of the Virgin Islands, September 8th, 2022. Introduction. Greetings to the chair, Senator Milton E. Potter, members of the Rules and Judiciary Committee, and all others present. The League of Women Voters of the U.S. Virgin Islands respectfully request excuse for our physical absence at this important hearing. We are currently engage in taping forums with candidates for elective office in collaboration with the local public television so voters can cast informed votes in November. We therefore request that our testimony be read into the record. Thank you. The testimony.

2:56:41 The League of Women Voters of the U.S. Virgin Islands applauds the continued efforts of Senator Kenneth L. Gittins in amending appropriate sections of title 18 of the VI code to reflect changes in the structure and operations of how elections in the USVI are governed administered and regulated while the League of Women Voters VI finds little of specific substance that is objectable we do have two minor questions. One 34-319 specifies the term of the election supervisor as eight years. Our question is whether the term is renewable or not as this is not addressed. Two, within the same bill we question the use of the male pronoun he, his, him and ask if the pronouns are being used in a generic and not gender-specific sense? If so, is this so stated elsewhere in the Code? Outside of these two matters, the League supports adoption of the five bills. Further, we encourage the continued updating of Title 18. It might even be worthwhile for the legislature to consider engaging a legal editor to systematically update key areas of the code thank you for the opportunity to comment submitted by dr gwen marie molyneur president league of

2:58:45 women voters vi this concludes the reading of the testimony mr chair thank you very much Madam Clerk, I know the Office of the Code Revisor is charged with doing some of the code clean up. So, you know, just for that point. Senator Bolquez, you are recognized for your point of information. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I just wanted to point out this point of information because on several occasions today we've been referencing Chapter 3, Section 94, but in fact that section does not exist in Chapter 3. It is in Chapter 5, Section 94, so I wanted to clarify that for the record. Thank you very much for that, Senator Bulquez.

2:59:39 Colleagues, we are going to proceed with a five-minute round. If additional time is needed, the Chair will consider providing additional time. We're going to start with Senator Bulkes. You are recognized for your five minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good afternoon to you, Supervisor Fox, and thank you for being here on your very busy schedule, as

it may be. Supervisor Fox, it has been about seven years since the election reform meetings, if I can call them that, took place with the Board of Elections with some movement, but in your testimony, I see that you have a number of amendments and considerations that still need meticulous attention. Are you in favor of reconvening such a reform-type election, reform meetings in an off-election year to amend or revise Title 18 laws?

3:00:37 Yes, Senator. Okay, very well. You also mentioned that you will be posting inactive voter listings in October. Where will we be able to find those listings? So, Senator, based on spaces that we have, first we have the post office. We had a meeting with the staff. We got an idea of doing the Department of Health, Human Services. Years before we used WAPA, but now you're not entering their buildings, so there's no way to post. And we look at other government agencies that we can post the listing on. Okay. How exactly are you notifying or trying to reach out to those individuals who may be coming off of the rolls, trying to ascertain if they're active or inactive?

3:01:24 So the first phase, Senator, we sent out letters with a statement letter in it attached, so they can complete that form and return it to us. We're doing a major campaign, as I mentioned. The flyers, I hope I share the flyers. I know some of these candidates and senators have seen them, so we're going to do a campaign, educational, PSA radio is going to be starting this month, run for the month, and then that's what we're going to do the list in October. So we're giving persons a 30-day window to respond, and if they don't respond, then we post the list. And again, family members may see someone, like things that happen here today, but know someone that no longer lives here and votes here. So that's what we intend to use. And going forward, then it will be less, because it will be every two years. Okay, we know that we have an amendment right now to propose an increase for the board members, but you also mentioned that there should be also an increase for poll workers. And I know that they work very hard, long hours, maybe 12 to 14 hours a day, even during early voting. How difficult is it for you to find adequate poll workers, and is the compensation still an issue? I know you mentioned it, but have they been complaining recently?

3:02:33 Yes, Senator Bulk, because I've been complaining for the last four years that I've been here, and that's why I make sure I mention it publicly, because they've given the board, we need to look out for the poor workers also. I know they did do an increase, I would give the senators credit, they did an increase I think in 2012, but cost of living has gone up, you know, and so if you want workers to come out to spend a type of hours with us, we need to compensate them accordingly. Also the caterers, food has gone up astronomically, so when I come here for money. Folks want to think, why are we asking for that money? But the requirements continue to increase because cost of living has gone up. Okay, I have another question outside the scope of poll workers and operations concerning the disparity that exists between gubernatorial candidates and senatorial candidates whereas gubernatorial candidates are not subject to laws concerning their conviction or a felony but are still able to run for that specific office what are your thoughts on that and do you think that that's something that needs to change well based on the last this election that we're going to when we get to the nomination process we found that was a concern we addressed it to the AG and in that research we looked at Guam law the legislative law and Guam is the implemented laws in the legislature that addresses that so we recommend this body or you know someone look at that we furnish them the information and we could create law so that that is prevented okay and my last question mr chair is what is the process with having numerous referendums we know that we've had referendum referendums on specific subjects more than once and do you believe the election system through the board should have the power to go ahead and call

3:04:26 a special election if, per se, we had three referendums on the same exact thing, and they're voted in favor by the people, but still no movement on them? So, Senator, because the referendum that we usually do are non-binding, there's nothing really the board, nor the legislature can do. So, it comes back to this body. So, if the referendum is the people's voice stating that then there's something that legislation should do, put laws in place, or et cetera, or task us to do an election to see where's the pulse of the people again we can do an election at any time by the call of the legislature or if someone's pass or etc so special elections we can do but it has to come from this body understood i i've just found that to be an issue when we pull the people to try to get the pulse of the people more than once on a specific subject and still there's no movement on it. And I believe that we should, not only this body, but also in coordination with your office, with the election system, be able to make that a reality for the people of the Virgin Islands, whatever that subject may be. So thank you for the time, Mr. Chair. I appreciate it.

3:05:34 Thank you very much, Senator Bolkes. Madam Supervisor, I know in your testimony you made mention quickly about the recount process, and I was just curious as to how was that recount process initiated who starts that you know who makes the decision so the candidates submit a letter to the board because the board deals with election and then the board will meet and they decide based on the criteria they have in place looking at the numbers the differences whether it's warranted or not and they respond back to the candidates whether they can get a recount or not but in some states like I mentioned it's a trigger there's a percentage that triggers that that's something we could look at and again why mention

recount because right now our last only says manually but because of technology we need to do manual or electronic so we need to update the law i am definitely more inclined to support a trigger again we alluded to some jurisdictions have something that would automatically trigger the recount as opposed to just squarely relying on the discretion of board members in this case you might do it in that case you might not so i think the trigger seems to be a much fairer and judicious approach but something to think about. Senator Johnson, you're recognized for your five minutes. Good afternoon, thank you very much Mr. Chair. Again, good afternoon to the supplier and good afternoon to the listening and viewing audience. You live and you learn in this business And I can see where our laws are so antiquated when it comes to titillating and where we definitely have to address a lot of these concerns and address them fast.

3:07:21 I do appreciate your testimony even going a little deeper in areas that we need to look at and aggressively address. And one of them that you mentioned that was shocking to a lot of people, the terms or conditions of someone running for the office of governor, someone that have a felony or commit a crime was not in place and still is not as we speak here today. So I appreciate you going a little deeper with that type of information. You have a recommendation of \$100 increase for compensation for pool workers. And your statement, you said it's \$325,000. And I do support these increase. I must say this morning, I went and do a quick shopping and i told the lady i didn't come to buy the store and and she told me a a gallon of oil was 25 cooking oil so i i do support and understand what you're saying the price of fuel for car transportation everything is up and if we want these folks to come out there i'm sure to increase the support of the initiative of increasing what what's the total cost if this was supposed to be be implemented, did you come up with a total cost?

3:08:37 No, Senator. We can't implement anything right now, so we'll have to look at it and see. Right now our poll workers run about \$60,000 for each base, again, and then you've got to do two elections. If it's three elections, it's going to be a little bit more. So it's about \$60,000, \$30,000 on each island. And like I said, we have all these other categories that we have to pay with the funding. 325 I'm asking for is for the runoff and this passage or this measure will come into place in the next election cycle which is 2024. Because we can't we can't institute any last six months within an election so we can't make any exceptions. And BR340457, have you have any Any discussion with the Director of Motor Vehicle at this time?

3:09:30 Yes, Senator. We started this process back in 2014 with Director Olive, so I'm kinda happy it's coming to some fruition, just that we have to tweak some languages. So it's been ongoing, as I always looked into it from 2014, I took a trip to Georgia, this state to make sure to see how it's run. So we're looking into it and hopefully we'll come to fruition the next year, January timeframe. And be our amendment, I should say, 340461, will any board member who is seeking re-election be exempt from having the ability to act as an inspector?

3:10:07 Those positions are only poll workers, Senator, they're not board members' positions. So all of those are poll workers, different categories are poll workers. The board on election day, they only come around and they observe, they may ask questions, but they have no role... Two minutes. process and election day. The judge is in charge at a polling place of voting centre and election day. And you said you will be posting the inactive voters listing by the beginning of October. Can you tell us approximately how many active voters we have at this present moment? Senator, in St. Croix we sent out over 7,000 letters. In St. Thomas we sent out over 9,000 In St. Thomas, I was here last week, we got back three, three loads of letters. Address unknown or no longer live. St. Croix, I looked at it yesterday, I think we have five. So they got to give me the total by the meeting on Monday, so I could say how much has been returned. But this process is viable and it's working.

3:11:09 Okay. And the election system have mounted an education campaign. Can you explain this campaign and how effective it has been? So far, Senator, like I said, I just came over to Seymour this morning. One of our flyers is posted there. So the flyers right now are out, telling them what's the process so they could not get on the inactive lifts. The radio announcements are going to start in the week. We have apps on our website and our Facebook page that's going to be going out. We hired a young strategic company that's helping us with modern era to get to the young people because a lot of them are registering, but they're only registering for the ID card. So we have to get the social media platforms up and running so we can reach them and let them know that, hey, if you don't come in, you need to get this active, you'll be inactive. So it's going to be mounted in the next week. You're going to hear more on the radio, TV and social media, Facebook, et cetera.

3:12:02 If I may, Mr. Chair, can I just follow up on this question based on the conversation we're having? You may conclude, Senator Johnson. Supervisor Fox, what do you think it's going to take for us to get our younger people involved in this process and to get them out there and vote? What do you think it's going to take us to do? I think we're going to get out there door to door and vote to vote. So we had a staff meeting yesterday and my staff gave some good input. We in the office also want to work with the board, but we need to go out to the communities, out to the schools and staff on the sixth grade level. Just we can't wait for the Department of Education. So it takes all of us. So we're looking at some ways, we're going to mount a campaign next year, half election year to reach out to one and all. We are looking at getting some

speakers, some young people involved that could tell them why they vote and sell themselves. So we're looking at different approach and we'd appreciate anything from the legislative perspective anyone can share with us. But it takes us, because I know we all talk about when we were in school or back then, but again we're here now and so it takes a start. But then when you go to the Department of Education, they let you know that they don't have any time. Based on the schedule, the schedule of fill, you can't come in to speak to the students. So you only could now go to neighbourhoods maybe, and I think it's all of us, it's the homes, it's the school, it's the political parties, it's all of us. Whether you're a senator or not, whether you're a former senator, we all can talk to a group of folks and maybe influence one. But I know, we all know when we were growing up, 60% of the person participated in the election, we're down to 30 something percent. So again who is voting for us? The elderly population and we sell it all the time. Would you like your grandmother to be letting you know what type of sneakers to buy? No. So those young people need to come out and get their voices to be heard.

3:13:53 So we have to talk to them at day level. Thank you very much for that. You know I run it for re-election so I've been doing that every day as I go around the place, making sure I talk to the young people them and encourage them because it's very disheartening when you speak to them and they don't want no part of this process so i guess as you say it's going to take all of us thank you very much for such here thank you very much senator johnson would you let your grandmother buy sneakers for you i don't think our children would do that so your point is well captured madam supervisor uh senator whitaker you're recognized for your three minutes sorry son of your five minutes good afternoon chairman thank you good afternoon colleagues good afternoon to people at Virgin Islands good afternoon to our testifier supervisor Fox one of the things one of the things that I just to put on the record the what year did the office go through with the sponsor of the legislation senator giddens um that process are you open to restoring that process where we actually beyond hearings work together to update the sections of title um 18. yes senator okay sorry because i'm just going to put on the record i think that would be a much better approach but for us to address the code one commissioner supervisor one of the things that um one of the One of the things, one of the challenges that voters encounter and what they're expressing is the concern about the machines. We heard of course complaints this election cycle. What have you done along with the board to bring out the information about the system about the status and also the process of auditing the elections?

3:15:46 So we completed an audit on August 31st. We sent out the press release and I show it shared with all the candidates. Again, this process is always open to the public. No one comes, but again on the radio and everyone speaks. Again the process is open to see what happens, even when we do not add it, election night. There was some concerns, it was addressed by a press release, but what we find out is some things are more sensitive as you increase, enhance your systems. So the board has met and decided that we're going to go to two columns instead of three columns on the express vote machine. Now we're going to have to press next, next, next, but again, that's the only fix that we could come up with at this time is not, again, that's a marking device, it's not your ballot putting in the machine. So if you mark something and it's not correct, you have up to three chances to remark it. The paper ballot, you're gonna bubble in the paper ballot completely as much as you can, you shade it in, and you put it in the same DS200. So the DS200 is the tabulation which had no issues and have no issues. And like I said, the audit was 100% accurate.

3:16:48 Thank you for the interest of time. Thank you, supervisor. In the context of voter education, what steps have you taken a supervisor election along with the board, not just to bring the equipment to the schools? Have you in fact had any meetings with the commission nominee, the board of education over voter education within the schools? Not yet, Senator. With this new commission nominee, no, we have not been in the election cycle, so right now we haven't been doing anything. Well, even an off election year, were any efforts made last year to engage over voter education in the schools? The board set up an education committee, there were some things done, again, I had a lot of PSAs out last time, talking about the process for election, when to register, so we started a campaign trying to do PSAs, reaching out to the schools, so we can do more and we'll be looking into that the off election cycle.

3:17:42 Two minutes. One of the other items, supervisor, is voter security. Through this budget cycle, you requested funds for voter security. What is the office supervisor doing about ensuring the safety of the election process? The election system process is 100% secure. We do have reports that come monthly. They're monitored off-island, out-of-state, and again, with some security concerns, we can't discuss in public. But we are 100% certain the security processes that we have in place are workable and are up-to-date. We do have cybersecurity tests on our systems all the time, and all those reports that come out with no findings each month. BIT also have some IT processes in place that they screen and check our day-to-day computers. Senators, so everything on that matter is 100% accurate at this time.

3:18:48 And you indicated that last increase for the poll workers in 2012, are we prepared this cycle, this upcoming fiscal year, this upcoming next election, would we be able to offer the increase to the poll workers, is it something that you have

through the budget process, provided those numbers by which we can take action as Senators? Yes, Senator. Once they pass the bill, then the same legislature will give us the funding. So once you pass the bill next year, we'll have it for 2024. So there's no interim measure that can be made?

3:19:19 No, Senator. No, Senator. We're not changing any law six months within an election unless it's an emergency. And so this is not an emergency. Thank you for putting on the record. The other item is concerning, one of the things that we've found, and if I may conclude, Chairman, that there are different issues surrounding violations throughout different elections. What are you doing?

3:19:51 Does the board have rules and regulations as it pertains to handling concerns raised during the elections process? So there's two avenues. If it's an election concern with voting, there is the federal avenue. We always have a FBI and a judge assigned to us in the territory. If it's something internal, then they report it to the board. The board has the process and procedures that are in place. And so that's the two avenues that we will utilize. Again, they'll file the complaint directly with the board. You know, they may send it to me in the office, but an election, anything election-related goes to the board of elections. So they will have to address it. Yes.

3:20:31 Thank you, and I thank you for what you've done, all the employees to continue to prepare us for the elections. Thank you very much, Chairman. Thank you, Senator Whitaker. Thank you very much, Senator Whitaker. Madam Supervisor, I was curious, in your presentation on page 12, you mentioned that we needed to codify, this is your recommendation, that we codify that the governor and the lieutenant should come from each district, and I just paused about it. I haven't thought about it deeply as yet. I know that is sort of the tradition where the candidate, if the lieutenant governor is from St. Croix, the governor will be from St. Thomas and vice versa. But I'm thinking that in a scenario where, for example, the people of the Virgin Islands felt as though we had two strong candidates from St. Croix, for example, that it should be allowable if the people of the Virgin Islands decided that that is the team that they wanted, and vice versa. So I'm a little, you know, think about it a little more, and I'm going to get you to sort of elaborate on this. So I'll give you an example. I mean, I don't know if much citizens would approve of that, but it came up as a topic where it's brought up. But you look at chain of authority and chain of command. So when you look at bigger than elections, so we have a natural disaster, They're both persons on one island. That's an example. Where's your chain of command? You think the folks in St. John and St. Thomas are going to say, oh, they're over there. So those are the type of things you look at. You have to have persons in place to have communication, chain of authority, and chain of command.

3:22:10 And I wouldn't like the chain of command to be in one district. That's an example. And others, there's many others. I got you. I mean, I'm thinking that the rules and regs are We can make the determination that in a natural disaster, for example, you need to have someone posted on a lead on St. Croix and St. Thomas. And it doesn't really guarantee that if a natural disaster occurs, that both persons will, you know, be in their home district. Not necessarily, but I'm going to debate yours.

3:22:47 You got some other debates on it. You could get some other points. We could talk about it a little further down the line. um senator joseph you're recognized for your five minutes thank you so much uh mr chairman pleasant good afternoon to you supervisor fox good afternoon joseph i wanted to i know this has been a long haul for you i recall when i was a member of the Board of Elections that we were going through a series of election reform hosted by the proponent of these amendments. My question is going to go to the heart of some of the amendments as it deals with deleting the word or primary. Is it your position, first of all, have you conferred and had a discussion with your board regarding these proposed amendments recently the board yes the board is aware of all the amendments and the many discussion for the last nine years that I've been there so recently I'm just asking recently are they aware of these amendments especially where it affects the board yes senator the last meeting we had on this was the middle ending of last year and so they were involved in that process last year okay and so what was their position and I mean I would have liked to at least have the board chairman here because we do have some areas where the board duties and responsibilities are being reduced and being relegated and to you as a supervisor of elections so what was what was their feedback the board is who

3:24:40 propose that. Board members propose that. So most of these amendments, like I said, came from board members. Just like I mentioned, Secretary of State because right now in reality the board comes out on election and they canvass. You don't see the board setting up for election. So if we can run early voting, we can run the election. They do the canvassing and the certification. But the board, based on my recollection, the board hires the election officers. They were the part persons who hire in the election officers and the and the like to some degree through their assistant when i was there we were the ones who were hiring the judges and having those meetings and trainings hand in hand with the election system so some of that responsibility is going to be falling under the supervisor of elections correct that's correct okay both districts did differently. So in St. Croix, the senior election assistant find the poll workers, assign them, vet them, and then the board usually review the list and approve it. So it goes different ways. Okay, so this is to bring some type of

uniformity. That's what you're trying to achieve? That's correct. Okay, because I know we did it differently in the St. Thomas, St. John district.

3:25:56 So I wanted to also ask you, there's an amendment here regarding intervention in suits where they're deleting the word a board of elections, those words. How is the board, what is the board disposition? And I mean they're not here, but you're represented, you've had dialogue with them. Because I know when I served on the board, we were inundated, which suits against the board members itself. So how would that representation, because it's typically the attorney general, but we had to hire private attorneys. to represent the board in these lawsuits.

3:26:39 Right now, it falls under the AG office, and if the AG can't support it in the law, you have the authority to hire a private attorney, just like the supervisor does. But will the board, with this deletion of this suit, intervention in suits, would this now prevent the board? It's Title 18, Subsection 58. Would this now prevent the board from actually being able to have representation should they be sued? Because it protects you as far as the election system. And the election system is comprised of different parts.

3:27:20 It includes the election system, which is under your jurisdiction, as well as the board. It's no longer as well as the board. You're shaking your head first. Remember, I'm still remembering all of this. My head is big for a purpose, right? So I just, so there's two. So we don't want to leave the board of election open and they don't have the ability to make any type of, get representation from the attorney general's office as well as the private attorney. And then I had another question because that's my concern. We don't want to leave them open. Everybody's being elected. This is a volunteer position. Mr. Chairman, may I?

3:28:07 You may conclude, Senator. Thank you. I did have another concern relative to the registration of persons because now we are deleting in Title 18, subsection 94, board members being able to register to more board members being able to register voters. voters and you know we have a lot of registration drives and typically it's the board members who go out to those registration drives and register voters and this of course will be a really great mechanism and outreach to and recruitment to register voters as well so I wanted to get your your input on that it's it's here in title 18 subsection 94 where that portion is being deleted Which amendment are you referring to, Senator?

3:29:03 This would be amendment number 34-457. So, Senator, I don't have that amendment here for discussion today. Oh, I think you commented on it. No, not five. I believe on page eight of your testimony you're saying 34-457. Senator, is that what you're talking about? It's saying 457 here.

3:29:32 457 that we discussed today is BMV. Okay. Okay. It says the board. Okay. Let me come back to that, Mr. Chairman, if you would allow me to, so I can show you. At a later time? Huh? At a later time? What are you saying? Today. Okay. Your time, you've exhausted your time. My time has expired, and I thank you, and I'll just make a point of inquiry. Thank you. Thank you very much, Senator Joseph. Senator Whitaker, you are recognized for your point of information.

3:30:11 Thank you, Chairman, for that acknowledgment. I want to put on the record that one of the elements as well, and I want to thank you, Supervisor Fox, as I've been reaching out to you on the matter of reapportionment. I will be moving forward with my reapportionment effort, and I'll be seeking the support of my colleagues. I will be following up with you after this hearing as I've been asking for dates, but I do want to put out that some of the issues and challenges that we're facing has to do with our infrastructure and also it also comes down to the manner in which we have our legislative districts as the election is processed. Thank you.

3:30:45 Thank you, Senator Whitaker. francis you're recognized for your five minutes thank you very much mr chair and good afternoon uh supervisor fox uh thank you for your testimony thank you for all that you do you and your staff and also the pool workers i'm always impressed by the level of seriousness dedication and commitment that these various pulling areas and i commend those individuals and truly i believe that they're very deservant of the um slight increase or the bump that they're about to receive once we're able to move these measures forward i also want to commend the ill sponsor um because of the amount of work being put out in getting these have been to this level and started the process to go through title 18 so i'm glad to hear that we're at this point today um supervisor fox in respect to how we address the notion and perhaps the naysayers about how we again calm the night in respect to individuals that feel that um that for some shape form that there are missing ballots um you know some there are some properties that occur within ballots and you know create some starting committee to respect to that as we continue to deliberate and discuss the mission of getting more people to uh to vote how do we dispel of the um the rule of missing ballots so senator again human being human nature we could only do so much and there's always that percentage that would not believe or trust anything hopefully well in majority of times those persons are the one that don't vote but they're the loudest noise maker all we can do is educate we have systems in place that have been tested and tried you google it anywhere New York City Florida use these same machines we open it up for the public to come and watch the process I have been there, I've known, I've seen,

I've tested the process. And so all we could do is continue to reach out and educate them, try different groups, different messengers. Sometimes they don't want to hear from us. They don't want to hear from the board members. So we're trying to look at some messengers, persons who have experienced, who have used the system for a number of years to do testimonies. So we're trying to embark on that type of awareness next election year, next year. So getting the young people who use a system to come and talk about it and share the experience and one of the members here we may have an 18 year old that voted for the first time and she wish she had captured his name so that he could be one of the ones that be a spokesman for us how he was so elated and he found the process so easy um we explained the process and you being a police officer um commissioner background some security measures we cannot explain to the public but two minutes all we can we do and it's an open process so you can see the jump drive comes sealed with police officer escort they're not in the individual cars they come in they go to the board at the conference room table everyone is there the public is watching the board verify the area then the board passes that jump drive to a technician who puts it in the machine it's red report is transferred to st croix it's read and then it's sent out to the webmaster there is no time everything is open to

3:34:30 the public so again all we can do is continue to educate thank you thank you very much for that i can see here the passion and certainly allowed uh for you to be able to explain that because i think it's important for us to dispel uh those notion in respect to the poor workers what is the mechanism used to to um to compensate these poor workers is is a check issued from your office or is the check prepared from the department of finance and how time the other payments made so senator um is issued for the department of finance we we go through the government system um they turn in the paperwork that election evening and then it starts the process we do have some that's a lingered if the paperwork is not correct they end up but we try to turn around the payment within two weeks after the election we do have a few vendors sometimes they bill us base and they bill in cycle but for the poor workers as much as we can we try to turn it around within the two weeks after the election because we're still doing stuff with absentee for 10 days so we can't jump to one thing we focus in and getting the absentee done to get the numbers and then we start the payment process very well thank you for that and our supervisor we know that based on uh collection of data that a majority of our voters are senior members of our community. Can you speak to how do we continue to support or assist in their endeavour to make sure that they're making their vote as accurate as possible? How do we be able to support and assist the seniors?

3:35:59 Ty? Your answers? May I respond? Yes, you may respond, Supervisor Fox. But in many ways, I would say positively, first we try to make sure we educate them. With this absentee voting bill that was passed, now a lot of them can vote from home. We mail them the ballot, they're very happy. Some that want to come out, they love the early voting process. We make sure we have the equipment for them and we give them priority handling, because the express vote is really for the disabled and the seniors and whatnot. So we try to make sure, and I also work with other groups, the Disability Rights Organization. schedule with them and human services for them to bring in their um seniors and early voting specific day and we convict that time of the morning to them and so they come in and they don't have a long wait so we continue to improve on the process each election but we know we take care of our seniors for sure uh thank you very much mr chair may i wrap up with one final question i heard my time call as a matter of fact uh that was the loudest i heard our time deeper all day but uh that's because you had like extra five minutes the last time so she she wanted to make sure that you heard this time but you may definitely proceed senator thank you thank you very much um in respect to the b bmv being able to issue the um the voters id card which i think is long overdue and i think that we need to get to the level of the window for quite some time now i wanted to ask what is the quality assurance that we put in into that um making sure that again all of the guidelines are followed and um you know the the check and balance uh to make sure that there's full compliance again reassuring this community that there is a fair and accurate process by which id cards will be issued thank you very much mr chair if you'll just allow her to respond

3:37:51 on your time i'll appreciate it thank you for your responses supervisor fox good job no problem Thank you, Senator. First, BMV will not be issuing any voter's card. They will be verifying the information and stating that the person is eligible to vote. They will transmit that information to us. We will verify on our end. We will put them in the database. If they need a voter ID card, they can come in the office to take their photos, because we don't have that set up right now with the process. So there, just because they go through a process to get your driver's license, where you provide your passport or your birth paper etc so they already have that in place which helps us so we're going to take that data and that information but we're not just taking what they send us we take it it sits in the queue we verify before we upload it in our database and they are not sending anything directly to our database so we're the ones that handle that and we will verify and then we will upload that person and send them a nice notice say that you're registered a little postcard and if you have any information or you want to do an ID come to the office. Excellent, excellent.

3:38:56 I definitely support, I'm supportive of all of the proposed amendments that a good senator from Frederickstead has brought before us today. The clean up language is definitely overdue and modernizing some of the language and the procedures and the fees and the stipends. was the last time the stipends and the worker, you know, the worker's stipends

were updated? The only stipend, the board stipend, were updated in 2012. I mean, that's the board, the poor workers. The board hasn't been updated. Okay. And what's your rationale for arriving at the proposed adjustment to the stipends? How did you come about? Was it just this sound like a good number or is it national surveys? How did you decide?

3:39:55 Well, we looked at national survey and my both deputies give input. It's not one way. We get empowerment from the staff. We looked at a state and they were up to like \$300. So we said, let's get to that. And then we go down from that. So we look at that methodology of doing it. That's how we come up to that amount. Of course, you know, the board members making a certain amount, so they can say, well, I'm making this, the workers making that. So you got a comparison. So we try to use standards that's out there nationwide okay i'll ask you just two final questions madam supervisor um in your view from all of the amendments that are being proposed which one is the most significant for you and your operations and just thinking futuristically what amendment would you like to see what major change would you like to see that might be transformative to the way that you do business as a supervisor of the election. So which one of the six or seven amendments that are before us today do you find to be most significant? And just thinking futuristically, what would you like to see?

3:41:04 I know you want to see a lot done, but the most significant change that we can make as a body will kind of be a game changer in the way we handle the electoral process here in the territory so of course being a supervisor of election i'm going to say the supervisory lecture rules are responsibilities from title four i mean section four from 47 that's significant and like i say out all these bills that one or two you couldn't put to february 20th because that's our 60th anniversary and it show where we've been to transition when the board was if some folks know back in the 60s i think the board used to register the persons within our offices and whatnot and that came into being after so that would be the most significant from our perspective from the community's perspective the bmv one would be second on my list again like i stated the election laws should be passed with enactment dates don't put them off till february because we have a lot more that's in the hopper we only to sect to chapter five we We have 17 chapters. The next critical chapters that I foresee is the penalties chapter. The penalties chapter and the campaign finance chapters are key. Campaign finance amount of \$1,000 has been out the door since 1980s. You can't get much for \$1,000 right now. Although you have two elections, you get \$1,000 in the primary and \$1,000 in general. Our fees for penalties are too low. Again, because with what's going on nationally and territorially and folks thinking about bad actors, if you have a fee that will cause you pain in your pocket, you will see it. Because right now, we have folks starting to take photos of their ballots in the place. \$50, they could pay that and move on.

3:42:54 So we need to increase our fees. And we have those proposals from years ago. So that would be key. But we can pass these, put some in January if you want, the critical ones we need for February, we want to show historic symbolism but the rest are in the hapa that needs to come before this body before the end of december we don't know what january is going to bring so again do what's before you now and deal with the future in the future okay thank you very much madam supervisor senator joseph you're recognized for your point of inquiry thank you so much uh mr chairman i wanted to inquire about and my question first let me just say my question regarding the deletion of the board members being able to or more board members being able to register voters I don't see that amendment I just side in the markup so you are correct and my point of inquiry is relative to primaries being deleted. I'm thinking it's because you're just saying elections, whether it's primary runoff election or general election, it's just elections, period. That's correct, Senator. Okay, so I don't know if that would be a technical item to include in a definition of elections, so it's clear and there isn't any question going forward what elections is defined as. Primary runoff and general election. Thank you so much Mr. Chairman.

3:44:39 Special elections also. And special elections so all of those need to be defined as an amendment that's a technical amendment as elections. Thank you. Thank you very much Senator Joseph. Senator Gittins you're recognized for your five minutes. Thank you uh mr chair uh first let me uh thank you for putting these uh amendments on today's agenda thank you to you and your staff uh thank you to the supervisor of elections and her staff and the board members for their input in these revisions i also want to thank my colleagues who have assisted in this process even dating back to the third first legislature now as we work the passionate piece of from the supervisor of elections uh colleagues i asked for us to continue at the input and the continued cooperation so that we can these revisions forward update our elections uh code within type 18. the amendments are straightforward so i'll just comment on some of the uh discussions placed on the record today first start regarding the supervisor of elections compensation for works and poor workers my office is in contact with the finance committee through finance cheer with regards to this long-standing issue it was also a discussion the budget markup

3:46:29 so hopefully we'll be able to address this matter secondly the supervisor also expressed her interest in addressing that the governor lieutenant governor come from each dish that matter is also being researched at this time and has been a

discussion however we need to do some more research uh for clarity uh i wanted to ask the supervisor of elections when you say the governor lieutenant governor coming from each district do you mean uh born in each district or do you simply mean residing in each district? I mean residing, Senator. Senator.

- 3:47:20 Residing. Residing. Okay, residing. So, we need to make sure that we're clear on that because as the discussion was going, we were under the assumption that that that you meant uh from being born now the league of women voters um also had a concern i'm trying to flip here on this small desk quickly about uh their second point was regarding uh the use of the male pronouns i just want to uh let colleagues be aware and the um the public that title one of the virgin islands code section 41 uh clears this up uh speaking towards denoting number gender etc giving definitions and as used in the code uh or in any act excuse me of the legislature unless it is otherwise provided or the context requires a different construction application or meaning words importing the The singular include and apply to several persons, parties, or things. And words importing the plural include the singular words importing masculine gender include the feminine. in so again in this term the masculine gender includes the feminine which should answer the concerns of the league of women voters in their second point and there was also a discussion with regards to the board's uh authority i want to remind colleagues and and the viewing and listening audience that what we seek to do today is to make sure that
- 3:49:38 all the operational issues falls under the direction of the supervisor of elections and allow the board to be what it is supposed to be, a regulatory body. That regulatory body should be addressing the policies of the election system and not being the entity to go out and actually conduct registration drives. Registration drives are clearly operational and should be run under the supervisor of elections purview. again thank you uh colleagues thank you mr chairman and these amendments will be uh offered at our next session and i'm asking you for your support as we move forward and if any colleague has any other uh revisions or any other section of the code of course they too can go ahead jump ahead uh get in here so that we can finish this uh timely thank you again mr chair thank you Thank you very much Senator Gittins. Colleagues we've exhausted our line of questioning here today for this block and which was our final block for the day I'm gonna ask a very busy supervisor Carolyn Fox to just provide us with a 30-second wrap-up. Madam supervisor thank you very much for taking the time to be with us today to discuss this very important matter.
- 3:51:19 again today's shaman potter we thank you and your members of the committee for this opportunity i think it's a great opportunity to publicly talk about the bills before they come to be voted and the am draft amendment again i'm pleading that we get these amendments into bills and finalize we can so we're going to do it next year we don't know what next year bring you put the bill according and you put the effective or the enactment date and that's what we support we do not support anything for this fiscal year so anything from december forward is fine for us thank you for the opportunity thank you very much supervisor fox colleagues uh we have exhausted our our day thank you very much for your presence here today i want to thank uh the hard working central staff employees my personal uh staff um thank you for being here thank you for all that you do uh in furtherance of the people's business the committee on rules and judiciary meeting of october 8 2022 of september 8 2022 is hereby adjourned so so what i'm trying to tell you you know, okay, you've got to change with the time.
- 3:53:08 Thank you. We'll be right back. Let's get started. Thank you. Thank you.
- 3:55:38 Let's get started. Thank you. Thank you.
- 3:57:08 Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Let's get started. We'll see you next time.

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.

- 12x **Senator Carla Joseph**
the surname alone also matches: Clifford Joseph; Karla J. Joseph
heard in this transcript as: Carla J. Joseph, Joseph, Joseph's
- 10x **Senator Franklin D. Johnson**
heard in this transcript as: Franklin Johnson, Johnson
- 9x **Senator Genevieve R. Whitaker**
heard in this transcript as: Whitaker, Whittaker

- 9x **Senator Kenneth L. Gittens**
heard in this transcript as: Gittins, Kenneth Gittins, Kenneth L. Gittins
- 7x **Senator Angel L. Bolques, Jr.**
heard in this transcript as: Angel L. Bolques Jr., Bolquez, Bulquez
- 7x **Senator Angel L. Bulkes Jr**
heard in this transcript as: Angel Boulkes, Bolkes, Boulkes, Bulkas, Bulkens, Bulkes
- 7x **Senator Milton E. Potter**
heard in this transcript as: Potter
- 7x **Senator Novelle Francis**
heard in this transcript as: Francis, Nobel E. Francis Jr., Novel E. Francis Jr, Novell Francis
- 6x **Senator Marise C. James**
the surname alone also matches: Javan James; Giovanni James Sr
heard in this transcript as: James
- 4x **Governor Albert Bryan Jr**
heard in this transcript as: Bryan
- 4x **Senator Javan James**
heard in this transcript as: Javon E. James Sr., Javon James, Jovan James
- 1x **Senator Angel L. Bolkis Jr**

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.

- Bill 34-0319** Act 8633 · An Act providing an appropriation for the operating expenses of the Public Employees Relations Board and the Virgin Islands Labor Management Committee for the fiscal year October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023 ---0
- Bill 34-0320** Act 8634 · An Act providing an appropriation for operating expenses of the Waste Management Authority from the Sewer Waste Water Fund of the Government of the Virgin Islands for the fiscal year October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023 ---0
- Bill 34-0321** Act 8635 · An Act providing an appropriation to the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission for the fiscal year October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023 ---0
- Act 8633** Act 8633 · An Act providing an appropriation for the operating expenses of the Public Employees Relations Board and the Virgin Islands Labor Management Committee for the fiscal year October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023 ---0
- Act 8634** Act 8634 · An Act providing an appropriation for operating expenses of the Waste Management Authority from the Sewer Waste Water Fund of the Government of the Virgin Islands for the fiscal year October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023 ---0
- Act 8635** Act 8635 · An Act providing an appropriation to the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission for the fiscal year October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023 ---0

Referred to but not found in our acts corpus: Bill 34-0233