

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, VETERANS
AFFAIRS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

12/02/2025-HELD IN COMMITTEE

BILL NO. 36-0190

Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

October 27, 2025

An act amending title 1 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 15 section 254 providing for sign language interpreters at all Government of the Virgin Islands broadcasts and official functions

PROPOSED BY: Senator Angel L. Bolques, Jr.
Sponsor: Avery L. Lewis

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:

SECTION 1. (a) Title 1 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 15, section 254, subsection (a) is amended by inserting the following language at the end:

“and where the meeting or official function of the Government of the Virgin Islands is visually broadcast, sign language interpreters must be provided.”

SECTION 2. (a) The Office of Management and Budget shall include in the annual Executive Budget an appropriation under the Office of the Governor to fund the implementation of this section including the hiring of at least one qualified American Sign Language (“ASL”) interpreter in each island-district who shall be available at all televised and broadcasted meetings of the Government of the Virgin Islands, its departments, and instrumentalities, where visual transmission is disseminated to the public.

(b) The funding must be sufficient to ensure the availability of qualified ASL interpreters for all live televised broadcasts and official functions of the Government of the Virgin Islands, as required by this section.

(c) In instances where a qualified in-person American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter is not available, the requirements of this section may be satisfied using a remote or virtual sign language interpreter if:

(1) The interpreter is certified or otherwise qualified under recognized American Sign Language standards;

(2) The interpreter is visible on the visual broadcast using split-screen or picture-in picture display; and

(3) The interpretation is provided live in real-time during the meeting or official function.

(d) This section shall take effect one year after enactment and the appropriation in subsection (a) must be included in the Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget and funded no later than September 30, 2027.

BILL SUMMARY

This bill requires sign language interpreters to be provided where the meeting or official function of the Government of the Virgin Islands is visually broadcast.

Section 2 requires the Office of Management and Budget to include an appropriation under the Office of the Governor to fund the implementation of bill by hiring two qualified interpreters, one for each island district.

BR25-0032/July 28, 2025/AA/Revised August 4, 2025/Revised I October 23, 2025/AA