



State of the Territory Address

Legislature USVI

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0:00:00 I need to feel your face close to me I need to feel your face close to me I need to feel your face close to me I know you don't know me You're afraid to take a chance But I will bridge the gap between us Thank you. Thank you. ¶¶ Thank you.

0:03:00 ¶¶ La la de los telos hay Filo la la de los telos hay Thank you. Thank you.

0:04:59 Lilo la la, lilo de lola, lilo la la, lilo de lola, óyame. Thank you. Thank you. Oh, my God.

0:06:59 Oh, my God. Thank you. Oh, my God.

0:08:29 Thank you. Thank you.

0:09:29 Oh, my God. Thank you. Oh, my God. Thank you. Thank you.

0:11:59 And good evening, good evening, good evening, and welcome to 2025 State of the Territory. My name is Alan Baptiste with the JTV, and my co-host... My name is Jamal Potter with the JTV. How are you doing, Jamal? I'm good, how are you? Good, good, good. We're here again. So we're looking forward to the state of the territory. Listen forward to what the governor has to say. How are you feeling right now? How are you feeling about where we at? I'm optimistic about where we are. I do believe a lot of Virgin Islands right now are probably a bit, you know, maybe they're a bit on edge with all that has been happening in the territory, but I would hope that a lot of us are cautiously optimistic about what we're about here today.

0:12:55 to you too great as i say something to look forward to um i am definitely looking forward to us his plans for the the future as to some of the stuff that happens in in the past with the case we know he's gonna draw like that we want to make it sound make it sound good for which is that we are so it's optimistic we have we have hope yeah you know so and we like i said glad to be here at the capitol and the irby arkley legislative hall i'm seeing thomas um i see you've been getting some some weather but outside looking lovely yeah it's it it has been a little The weather's been a bit unstable, crazy.

- 0:13:28 I don't know what you want to call it, but we've had some interesting weather recently. Okay, good, good. So we also have to welcome the 36th legislature. Looking forward to that. We have a new Senate president. We have actually some new members as well. So we're looking forward to some of those conversations as well, and later on we will hear from them as to what they taught and what the governor's moving forward to and what he's pushed back into what he's doing so looking forward to that as well also you could listen to us on you could check us on we are on Facebook we're on Facebook we're on X we're on LinkedIn and YouTube that's right so you follow us if you're not can't catch us here there's other different places you could catch us and we are also live on via on channel we are 26 on cindy six and hd on 526 526 yes yes yes so you could definitely catch the state of the territory 2025 um we are here sitting now waiting um there i've heard that there's a crowd outside already um we have seen some people came in coming in and sitting down so we're looking good we're looking good so far looking good okay keep talking keep talking keep talking i don't pop the graphics that i keep talking we're just working on audio so i'll keep going she's going to go in smoothly One of the most important things as well is the WAPA situation.
- 0:15:31 We definitely need to hear some kind of progress on that and how it is we can move forward. That's affecting every single Virgin Islander. I mean, amongst a lot of things, one of the things that will also have been in my mind is our health care. You know, at some point, some of us are going to have some kind of family that's going to need to go to the hospital. Yes. And we would definitely like to know that they're going to be well taken care of. Yes, and that is a thing that I think that is affecting everyone. I'm not going to go into details myself, but I've had family members who've had some health situations in recent time, and they've been very concerned about the state of the the hospital there is one person who i know he they said hey i actually went into the the emergency room i was there for hours and i was not serviced so great great so like i said somebody some of the stuff down one part for sure is definitely um on top of my list to be honest with you like i said affects a lot a lot of us um and And also, even with the health care, we see that Senator Fonseca is back on the health with the KSB. I think that's a good choice. I think he was doing a good job.
- 0:16:42 I think he has a well-rounded about, especially with the OLA community, which we know for sure that we have a very OLA community right now. Yes. Once again, we are seeing the Virgin Islands, its population is getting older. So I think as this population is getting older, we're going to have to focus a lot on those kinds of services. I can't name everything after that in my head right now, but as this population gets older, you're going to have to focus on health care significantly. Definitely. Definitely. Like I said, we're at the Capitol building on St. Thomas.
- 0:17:16 We're waiting for the arrival of Governor Albert Bryan. We're also waiting for the arrival of our 36 legislature senators. We have a new Senate president, Senator Potter. He's, what was his, second year, second year, third year, third year, so we also have some veteran senators. I was looking at some of the dates, and some senators are here from 2015, which is very impressive as well, you know. So we have a good type of veterans, and we also have some freshmen coming in as well. Okay, it's good. Okay, so we've been talking about the outside, and in a few seconds we should be able to go to Africa Harrigan, she's here with LeJet TV as well, and hopefully she could give us a synopsis of what's going on outside in the beautiful island of St. Thomas.
- 0:18:20 Thank you. Outside of the grounds of the legislature of the Virgin Islands, you can see over here we have the governor's cabinet just arriving mingling awaiting for the start of the state of the territory address delivered by governor albert bryan surprisingly this year we do not have any protesters the protesters stands are very empty usually in the past we've had the teachers unions come forward we've had the steel workers unions come forward but this year everyone seems to be pretty quiet and even in recent years people were also coming out to protest against the high village of wapa but this year the protesters are quiet for the state of the territory address so as the governor's cabinet enters the legislature of the virgin islands we have the red carpet for them to come and then right here they take their photos their professional photographs prior to entering into the Earl B. Otley Legislative Hall upstairs. And that's what's happening right now. Everything is quiet. It's a nice windy day. Everything's mellow and everyone's just simply awaiting the governor to come to the legislature of the Virgin Islands. Back to you, Jamal and Alwyn. Thank you. Thank you so much, Africa. You get get us a good bird's eye view of what's going on outside. We did a Facebook post and asked some questions about what people wanted to talk about, what they wanted to hear from the governor's city to the territory, which is actually, this is actually his seventh city to the territory.
- 0:19:58 So what are some of the questions or some of the ideas that people were talking or saying? Okay, let's talk about the Facebook the Facebook posts. Let's see what we have there. We've recently seemed to have the presence of ICE in the community. This is what's been concerning in various parts of our community. One commenter says dental care for seniors and children. We have another commenter stating he needs to talk about raises, raises, raises, especially for school monitors, custodial workers, hiring maintenance workers and paying a living wage. We have better education, better hospitals and tax returns. Tax returns have always been a heated issue. More education, lack of schools, the saying

we need better repair and maintenance, lack of staff, teachers.

0:21:29 teacher retention has been a high issue in the in the territory. Health, again, lack of facilities, crumbling structures. One asks about why hasn't the minimum wage gone up? Once again, education, hospitals, disaster recovery, infrastructure, financial accountability. I think there is a theme that's been going on here. We're asking about health and financial accountability and education. There is definitely a main theme that has been observed here.

0:22:09 And I'm glad, I'm grateful for the polls. This is what we actually live through, we're going through, a lot of us going through this for the KSB. So these are sensible topics. These are some, at least if you're a Virginian, at some point you have to be filled with at least one of these topics for the KSB. So we're grateful for a lot of the responses that we got just want to quickly mention some of the the new body like I said I mentioned earlier before we have a new Senate president we have Senator Bainter E Potter we have another veteran senator of the vice chair senator Kenneth L Gittins some of the other members senator Marvin a blighting senator Angel Elborkes jr. senator Dwayne M. de Graff senator Ray Fonseca senator noble francis jr another veteran as well senator alma francis heiliger senator hubert I frederick which also will be a newcomer met senator marie c james senator frankie johnson has done some terms she has been here from 10 20 21 and some place around here uh senator clifford a joseph senior also a newcomer uh senator avery lewis newcomer as well and another um veteran as well senator kurt a really so it's a this is a different bunch again um you know we've seen a little changes here and there with the case but it is a different bunch um like i said we're looking forward to the 36th legislature um i hope i'm hopefully that i'm hopeful that you know they hit the ground running because i said we have a lot of issues that we that we're trying to face and we're trying to attack we're going to listen to the governor's uh sit through the territory of course he can highlight some of the stuff that's done in the past year and what's never the case but hopefully he touches on some of the stuff that we need to work on as well you know somebody some of your

0:23:58 other thoughts on that um well but i i think i do share a lot of the thoughts that most virgin islanders are having once again we are concerned about healthcare we're concerned about education i think a lot of us you know particularly i'd say my my generation coming up the quote unquote millennials a lot of us are concerned about we're basically just there trying to trying to make it we're trying to you know just be comfortable and live and right yeah you know something you just don't want to hear about the negativity you just want to hear you know we're working on this and we could see it happening with the case sometimes we see the changes you know when again we see some So we know that he's making his best attempt on what's not. Sometimes it just feels like it's a little slower. It feels like it's not on the forefront. But like I said, I encourage people to listen to Senate hearings and be a part of these conversations. Listen to the governor, listen to his speeches, so we could have detailed conversation amongst ourselves as well. That is a conversation that I have a lot with my friends.

0:25:06 I would tell them, hey, watch one of these hearings. Come to the legislature to sit down and see how the process works. I think the issue that we've had a lot of time is that I think, very frankly, a lot of us don't understand and don't know how this process works. I think a lot of us believe that, hey, we have this problem today, and someone's supposed to magically wave up a magic wand, and it gets fixed tomorrow. So I really want a lot of us, and particularly my generation, to sit down and learn and figure out how exactly this thing works exactly. Really. That's very interesting, very interesting. Again, you can find us, legislature.

0:25:52 We do a good job of getting this information out. So whatever platform that you choose to watch or listen, like I said, be a part of the conversations. We do a lot of work, a lot of work behind the scenes make sure that we could put this information out. You can find us on X at LegislatureUSVI. Also at YouTube at LegislatureUSVI as well. LinkedIn company, LegislatureUSVI again. Vimeo.com legitTV. And follow us on Instagram at LegislatureUSVI. So you can find us wherever you can find us. Be a part of this conversation. Like I said, we do a lot of work to make sure that get this information out to you a lot of behind the scenes so just do your part and we should and we should be good we should be good we should be good so like i said we're waiting on the the governor's to like his cabinet to arrive and also our sitting senators um we're looking forward to a a wonderful night um hopefully we learn something hopefully we get some some good news to energize us and and make us feel good to be a virgin and that's a night where the case to be moving forward any thoughts or what about you um i don't think i have any additional thoughts but once again i think a lot of virgin islands is probably just we're wanting something good right i think a lot of us have probably felt a little maybe we've felt a little depressed recently because of all that has been happening we've seen we've seen a lot of negative we've seen a lot of negative headlines recently and i think a lot of us are probably looking for this to get something good. Agreed. Agreed. Agreed. So we're here at the capital on St. Thomas, island of St. Thomas, we're heading forward and we're going to be back to Africa. Africa, are you there? What are you doing? Okay, so I'm still up here on the grounds of the legislation of divergent islands and if you look to my right you can see that the governor's cabinet is actually lining up waiting to for the governor to arrive um i believe that more of his cabinet members as the time gets closer the line would

get a whole lot longer you can hear the motorcates i'm assuming it's oh no that's not them okay well traffic is definitely blocked off vipd as well as other federal agencies are collaborating today to ensure that the state of the territory is very safe so if you're coming downtown towards the legislature of the virgin islands you might be diverted because they have that road blocked off ready

0:28:37 for the governor to make his grand entrance if you look outside here we still have the line it's just getting a little bit longer while cabinet members are still strolling over here to line up as well but um that's what's happening outside here for the state of the territory address so you're not seeing any um protesters no right now we do not have any protesters to my surprise usually we do have protesters people come out to protest against low wages or to get a raise people come out to protest against the high waffle bills people come out to protest the steel workers union and the teachers union usually come out to make their voices heard but this year surprisingly the grounds are very quiet i'm actually very i'm i'm i'm very shocked to hear that yes i am i am very shocked to hear that as well i i think we've always known virgin islanders to be very vocal and to be very you know expressive and to not see them out there tonight i'm i'm definitely shocked or maybe our facebook post worked and all of the protesters probably be a good thing but once again i i always encourage people hey it is your right to protest it's your right to go and say hey i'm not happy do something about this that is literally your right in the constitution to say hey i'm not happy do something about this and this is the best stage you know he's going to be here and you know like i say he's going to talk about the stuff that he's done in the last year and what a case beyond what he's looking forward um he actually has two more years two more years to get whatever it is he has um needs to get done with the case um and it might seem like a short time but he's gonna it's gonna move real fast it's gonna move Because we were just in the 35th legislature, and it seemed like that just went like that.

0:30:38 That's right. That's right. That's right. So like I said, I'm looking forward to hear his take and his strengths and where it is that we need to do better as a whole, as a community. And for the senators as well. Like I said, we have some freshman senators coming in. Most of them have had some kind of background in government. So they should be at least familiar with what it was. I would hope that having some sort of government experience would probably give you, I don't want to call it a cheat sheet of sorts, but you'd have an idea of what the problems are. Maybe you have an idea of, OK, this is probably how I would want to solve this.

0:31:19 Or you have a general working of how you think, hey, I'd like to fix this in X way or Y way. Right. And then another topic that we as Virgin Islands know, we have 15 senators, and we have seven at St. Croix, we have seven at St. Thomas, and we have, but they are not magicians as well. They have to go through some of the same processes that people have to go through. We have to talk to people and get feedback. Senators are here to write laws, not really to call public works out with a case.

0:31:52 Yeah, and I feel that has been one of the things. We've had this, I think it goes back to civics. I now have a running joke with friends that I say, I think the only civics at Virgin Islanders know are the one that's dry. But I really feel that civics education needs to be a thing. We need to go and say, hey, this is how this works. If you have the problem, you're supposed to go directly to them.

0:32:22 It's that the senators, yeah, they're here to help, but they're not the ones who are actually going to go on and put that into it. The department needs money. Yeah, they need money. They have to go ask for the money, and then this is going to get taken care of. Right, and then they do a follow-up as to, OK, we gave you the money. What did you do with the case? I agree with that part, one quote called wholly with the case, because that's the job. Somebody, like I said, I think the public looks in a different way. And I mean, you can still do what you have to do. It's still fine. But what's not, but we still need you to make your bills and making sure that we get some of these things done, eh? Yes. That's it. Oh, good. Yeah. We had a little difficulty there. We're still waiting on the governor's entrance. We're here.

0:33:14 I'm here with my co-host, Jamal. My name is Alan Baptiste. And we have Africa outside. I don't know if she's getting any action outside as yet. We just saw, I think the only person that I recognized was former Senator Positive Nelson. That's the only person I recognized from this seat. I believe, well, I guess when we go back to Africa, we will see who else is lining up. And when they get in the chamber, they have a seat. We could get a better idea of who's there and which department they're representing, right?

0:33:50 So, looking forward to it, looking forward to it, looking forward to it. Looking forward. Africa, are you there? Yes, I am. So, we're still on the grounds of the legislature of the Virgin Islands. It's very quiet. I think that the alarm that just went by, everyone thought that it was going to be the governor's motorcade coming through to the grounds of the legislature, so everyone was lining up. And when everyone realized that it was not the governor, just dispersed and started mingling again and that's fine too as you can see we have vipd on the ocean vipd blocking the roads so this is a very secure environment out here in the grounds of the legislature of the virgin islands there are still cabinet members that are strolling in getting their photos taken walking on the red carpet and mixing and mingling until the governor comes this is

definitely a highly anticipated state of the territory address it is governor albert bryant's seventh state of the territory address and everyone in the virgin islands is probably glued to legit tv just to hear what he has to say thank you so much back to you jamal and alwyn thank you africa thank you africa i i love that shot that's what makes me feel good Next time we're going to have to switch and put her in here, we have to go outside.

0:35:10 We need to be outside. Loving it, loving it, loving it. So actually, when we convene, we convene with the Senate session. We're in recess now, so we're going to the Senate session first, and then about 7 o'clock we should be awaiting the presence of the governor. So we're looking forward to Senator Bill Tampata, Senate President, Senator Tampata, wrote a case, But like I said, this is his first go-round at it. Yes. And I'm looking forward to see how he handles the 36th legislature. We should be good. We should be good. I'm optimistic. I feel like we should be good.

0:35:47 I would say I am cautiously optimistic to see what comes out of the 36th legislature. Thanks. Agreed. I agreed, agreed, agreed. We have a welcome back from Senator Viallee as well, Senator Francis, and have almost the same type of terms, with the exception of Senator Valle not running because he went for governor. So then he comes down to terms for most of them. Also, Senator Blighton is up in that race. He should be there from about 2015. 2015, if I remember correctly. Yes. That's right. So they've been there for a while.

0:36:23 We have some veteran senators in the mix. Right, right. So they should be a no-brainer. They should be accustomed to this speech as well. They're supposed to know, to knock this out the park. And from this, most of the questions that we basically asked, what was the tone and what's not. But this time, I think we want to get more directly, some more direct answers. The senators already formed the committees, committee members and what's not. So we want to get more detailed information as to what's the plans, what we want to tackle first, what's the lowest fruit that we could pick right now that we have to deal with. Like I said, we could go on and on. we have stuff we can go on and on about this we got stuff to discuss to discuss to discuss so like i said we're looking forward to it any other thoughts you have jamal uh no once again i don't think i have any immediate thoughts on this but once again i always i always tell everybody you know sit down and watch the process um i think a lot of us are probably unaware of how all of this works and i believe that tends to give you a lot of it gives you a lot of ignorant answers as to how this thing works so once again i implore anyone within the sound of my voice come to the legislature one day if we're in session you know just come and listen and then you'll probably get to see how this thing works so make sure you dress up yeah just just come dress appropriately and we'll welcome you. Yes, yes, yes.

0:38:21 Thank you. so Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:40:51 Thank you. Thank you.

0:41:51 Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. The legislative session of January 13th, 2025, which reconvenes today, January 27th, 2025, is now back on the record. Please stand as we have Father Anthony Abraham of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church, Coosby St. John, lead us in a word of prayer.

0:42:46 Let us pray. let us pray heavenly father we thank you for today we thank you for your love and for your goodness to us we pray that you will be with us through the power of your spirit this evening that everything that happens here will be for your honor and for your glory may your blessing be with us today and every day of our earthly lives father son and holy spirit amen Thank you very much, Pastor Abram. I was short and sweet.

0:43:55 You may be seated, ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Secretary, can we please have a quorum call? Yes, sir. Yes, Mr. President. Senator Marvin A. Blyden, present. Senator Blyden, present. Senator Angel L. Bulkes, Jr., present.

0:44:34 Senator Bulkes, Jr., present. Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff, present. DeGraff, present. Senator Ray Fonseca. Senator Fonseca, present. Senator Novell E. Francis Jr. Senator Francis Jr., present. Senator Alma Francis-Heiliger, present. Senator Francis Hyliger, present. Senator Hubert L. Frederick, present. Senator Frederick, present. Senator Kenneth L. Gittins, here. Senator Gittins, present. Senator Maurice C. James, aye. Senator James, present. Senator Franklin D. Johnson, aye. Senator Johnson, present. Senator Carla j joseph senator joseph present senator clifford a joseph senior senator joseph senior present senator avery l lewis present senator lewis present senator milton e potter here Senator Potter? Present. Senator Kurt E. Valey? Here. Senator Valey? Present. Mr. President, 15 members present. Thank you very much, Senator Lewis. We have a quorum, so we are prepared to proceed. Madam Clerk, are there any pieces of correspondence to be read into the record at this time? Thank you very much. Madam Clerk, can you please read this evening's agenda into the record?

0:46:21 Consideration of floor agenda. The 36th legislature of the Virgin Islands will reconvene to receive the State of the Territory Address from the Honorable Albert Bryan, Jr., Governor of the Virgin Islands. Thank you. Thank you very much, Madam Clerk. Okay, good evening colleagues. Once again good evening to everyone. We're gonna stand, we're gonna recess for one minute. Thank you.

0:47:44 ¶¶ Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And we are back, and they are all lining up. We are back at the Legislature of the Virgin Islands, and we're getting ready for this theater and who are we seeing there so far, Jamal?

0:50:18 Is that the, is that his cabinet? I'm not sure. Yes, that's some of his cabinet. Some of his cabinet members, yes. I see, is that Patrick Williams from the Veterans Office? Veterans Affairs, Veterans Affairs. We also see the Director for Energy. I'm not sure who else I'm seeing, but it does look like we are seeing the governor's cabinet getting ready to line up to enter the legislative building.

0:51:06 Good evening, all right. Once again, we'd like to welcome the members of the judiciary, led by our Chief Justice, the Honorable Reese Hodge, and the presiding judge of the Superior Court, the Honorable Deborah Watlington. Thank you.

0:52:26 Good evening and welcome. Thank you. Thank you.

0:53:56 Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, good evening to the judiciary. Good evening to the leaders of the semi-autonomous instrumentalities, as well as the members of the Governor's Cabinet and staff. Thank you.

0:55:16 Thank you. Thank you.

0:56:16 Good evening and welcome. Welcome, cabinet members. I'd also like to extend a very special welcome to our Teacher of the Year from the St. Thomas, St. John District, and my chief of staff insisted on giving a plug for Norfolk State University, Mr. Cornel Henley.

0:57:06 Welcome. welcome and congratulations mr henley thank you for all that you do a teacher of the year for the saint thomas aside for the same core district miss sharice davis has not arrived ah there she is welcome miss davis welcome welcome and congratulations on this very important accomplishment. Let us welcome next the Lieutenant Governor's mother, Ms. Ione Roach, and the Lieutenant Governor's sister, Ms. Violet Roach-Brown, escorted by Senior Capitol Officer Ms. Charlene Francis.

0:58:38 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

1:00:08 Thank you. Thank you.

1:01:08 Here she is. Let us welcome once again the Lieutenant Governor's mother, Ms. Ione Roach, and Lieutenant Governor's sister, Ms. Violet Roach Brown, escorted by Senior Capitol Police Officer, Charlene Francis.

1:02:03 Welcome, Mrs. Roach and Ms. Brown. Now it is my privilege to welcome the Honorable Congresswoman, Stacey Plaskett, escorted by by Majority Leader, Senator Kurt Veillet. Thank you.

1:03:21 Please join me in welcoming the Lieutenant Governor of the Virgin Islands, the Honorable Trogenza Roach, escorted by the Honorable Avery L. Lewis, Secretary of the 36th Legislature.

1:04:17 Thank you. Thank you.

1:05:17 Please be seated. Tonight we continue the legislative session that began on January 13th and pursuant to Section 9C of the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands to receive the seventh State of the Territory Address from the Honorable Albert Bryan Jr. Governor. free edification, the legislative session was in recess. We were in recess from January 13th, and that is why we did not have the posting of the colors. Just thought I'd let you know that, right? The governor of the Virgin Islands, the Honorable Albert Bryan Jr., will be escorted by the Honorable Kenneth L. Gittins, Vice President of the 36th Legislature.

1:06:42 Legislature. The bugle call will be performed by Specialist Tyron Mills, an announcement by Senior Capitol Police Officer Delving Fleming. Please rise. Mr. President, the honorable governor of the United States, Virgin Islands, Albert Bryan, Jr. Thank you. Thank you.

1:08:45 Please be seated. Good evening, Governor Bryan. Welcome to the LB Atlee Legislative Chambers. Governor Bryan, we welcome you to present the State of Our Territory. Thank you, Senate President Milton Potter. Before we start, I just want to take one moment to acknowledge the great architect of the universe and my Creator for the many blessings the Virgin Islands has had over the years.

1:09:21 Some people think that blessings are always in the form of avoiding trouble, but in the Virgin Islands we know that our blessing is also to be equipped with the resources, the persistence and the faith in God to see us through. Father Anthony Abraham, Lieutenant Governor Tregenza A. Roach, Esquire, Senate President Milton E. Potter and members of the 36th Legislature, Chief Justice Reese S. Hodge and the Justices of the Virgin Islands Supreme Court, presiding Judge Deborah Watlington and the judges of the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands, Delegate to Congress Stacy Plaskett, Chief Judge Robert Molloy and judges of the District Court of the Virgin Islands, members of my cabinet and other agency heads, members of my staff, State Chair of the Democratic Party, Carolyn Burke, other invited guests, and my fellow Virgin

Islanders, good night. With the election season behind us, I want to express my profound gratitude to every voter who participated in our democratic process. Your voice is the heartbeat of our democracy and your engagement speaks to an enduring commitment to shaping the future of these islands. To Senate President Milton E. Potter, congratulations on your peers' vote of confidence to lead this distinguished body. To every member of the 36th legislature, congratulations on earning the trust of the people. The next two years will pass swiftly but they hold the potential for transformative progress if we act boldly and work collaboratively a noteworthy acknowledgement goes to our first-time elected Democratic senators Clifford Joseph, Lorenzo Frederick and Avery Lewis your elections reflects the

- 1:11:21 people's trust in your leadership and dedication to public service may you approach this calling with passion, purpose, and a steadfast commitment to those you serve. I would also like to recognize Senator Novell E. Francis Jr., whose leadership as president of the 35th legislature was a testament to the power of unity and collaboration. Senator Francis, you reminded us that progress comes not from focusing on divisions, but from aligning our efforts toward the common good. Thank you, sir. To this new legislature, I urge you to follow that example. Lead with integrity, collaborate with purpose, and champion the causes that uplift our people. See, leadership is not merely about opposing, it's about delivering results that transform lives. Where this body and our administration succeed, the Virgin Islands succeed. And when we fail, our people pay the price.
- 1:12:33 Let us commit tonight to winning for them. I also extend my congratulations to President Trump and the newly elected leaders across our great nation. I trust that we can move forward, not as Democrats or Republicans, but as Americans and Virgin Islanders. united in our effort, we can chart a course defined by opportunity, progress, and a shared purpose for our future. As we look to that future, we must also honor the legacies of those who have shaped our past. We celebrate the life and contributions of former Senator Milton Bulfret, a dedicated public servant, and a friend. We also remember Brigadier General Liel Gerard Gallabere, a pioneer of the Virgin Islands National Guard, whose leadership and patriotism were unmatched. See, this past year was a bit of an anomaly, as Mother Nature rained on us and prevented us from celebrating Veterans Day. So tonight, I would like to honour the Honourable Vern A. Hodge, retired First Lieutenant from the United States Army from St. Thomas, Wilfred Charles Stewart Sr., retired Sergeant First Class from the United States Army from St. Croix, and Henry Augustus Powell, Retired Supply Logistics Division Chief from the United States Navy from St. John. Mr. Powell and his lovely wife Carol are here with us tonight as my special guests.
- 1:14:09 We must recognize the patriotism and sacrifice of our service members, those who extended their commitment to the broad ideals of freedom and security. The men and women of the National Guard exemplify what it means to serve with courage and selflessness. As they volunteered to support the nation's military forces, they stand as a testament to the proud, resilient and deeply patriotic spirit of the Virgin Islands. Additionally, I commend the 35th Legislature for passing two landmark laws honoring the sacrifices of our first responders. Act 8941 renames the Tango Company Fire Station in Estate Fortuna to honor the extraordinary service and enduring legacy of my good friend, the late Darrell Mousseley George, former director of the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Service.
- 1:15:05 His life work reminds us the profound impact that leadership and devotion can have on the community. Act 8939 memorializes the ultimate sacrifice of our law enforcement officers who gave their lives in the line of duty. This act is more than a tribute. It is a powerful call to honor and support those who risk everything to keep us safe. As we reflect on our shared journey, we are reminded that leadership is not just about navigating the present, but also about laying the foundation for a better future. These moments of acknowledgments, elections, elections won, lives honored and sacrifices remembered are not merely ceremonial.
- 1:15:52 They are milestones that anchor us to the values that we hold dear and the vision that propels us forward. These are indeed exciting and demanding times, and I often find myself returning to the foundation we built together seven years ago. It was a platform grounded in a simple yet profound mission to provide the best quality of life we can for the residents and guests of these Virgin Islands. On its surface, this goal may appear straightforward, but it is layered with the complexities and challenges inherent in governing the community as vibrant and diverse as ours. The simple truth is that we have made progress, tremendous strides in the face of new and daunting challenges. But despite these hurdles, we have managed to address the pressing issues that the people demanded we confront.
- 1:16:41 At the time, we were grappling with the aftermath of two Cat5 hurricanes, record high unemployment, face a public pension system failing, deteriorating infrastructure, and staggering unpaid obligations to vendors and our people. From the start, our priorities were clear, stabilize the government's finances, fulfill its overdue commitments, and begin the ongoing work of restoring trust. Trust among our people, our federal partners, and our investors. Our second priority was to leverage that trust to attract federal and private investment dollars. And our third priority was to reinvest all of that, all of that funds, all of those funds in our people. It's a simple formula for success, but the journey, the journey has been anything but simple. Along the way, we faced unprecedented obstacles, the global pandemic, rising inflation, climate

change, and supply chain disruptions. We all tested our resolve at every turn. Yet through it all, we together have remained steadfast in our commitment to you. Has the road been easy? No. Have our plans always unfolded as intended? Absolutely not. Yet time and again we have come together, found solutions and forged the path forward guided by our shared vision for a stronger, more equitable Virgin Islands. I always say you have to surf the wave that comes, not the one you want. Today we stand at a pivotal juncture not merely enduring adversity but rising above it. This moment is defined by progress hard fought and hard won progress that reflects our collective resolve to tackle the toughest issues and create meaningful change we stabilize the government Virgin Islands failing pension system paid hundreds of millions in overdue obligations and address the millions in arrears to the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority demonstrating our commitment to fiscal responsibility and restoring trust in the government. These achievements, they're more than just milestones. They are proof of what is possible when we approach adversity with determination, focus and an unrelenting belief in the potential of the people of this Virgin Islands. But let us be clear, progress is neither swift nor without its trials. It tests our patience, it challenges our resolve

1:19:08 and it often demands that we leave behind the familiar to embrace the promise of something greater. Change, by its very nature, brings discomfort. It asks us to adapt, to grow, and reach beyond what we thought possible. Through this progress, however, we have seen that as one challenge is resolved, another emerges to take its place. The robust economy we see today, bolstered by recovery funds, pandemic-related social subsidies, and an unprecedented wave of development project has introduced new pressures.

1:19:43 The inflation in rent, housing, and food, the costs are undeniable, not just here in the Virgin Islands, but across the nation. These pressures are real, and they demand thoughtful, forward-looking solutions. Our work is far from complete. But tonight, let us reflect on how far we have come, The challenges we face and the progress we have made are a testament to the strength of our people. The power of collaboration and the transformative impact of leadership committed to action. Together we are building a Virgin Islands that not only meets the needs of today but continues to strengthen the foundation for a brighter and more prosperous tomorrow.

1:20:35 Tonight, I stand before you with pride and resolve to declare that the state of our territory is progressing, progressing in the throes of great change. While many of the fruits are still on the horizon, this transformation and our progress is undeniable, and its impact is being felt by all. And just as in your family and my family, we must adapt to the arrival of all this change, reshaping priorities, adjusting finances, and embracing new responsibilities. Our government and territory are undergoing their own profound evolution. Our journey forward rests on three unshakable pillars · our people, our economy, and the infrastructure that sustains them.

1:21:27 These fillers represent the heart of our progress and the foundation of our future. Tonight, I will guide you along this path, celebrating the strides we have made, confronting the challenges we face, and illuminating the opportunities that lie before us. As we reflect on our progress, one area stands out as a shining example of growth and opportunity. Our economy, driven by the strength of our tourism industry, is on fire. In fiscal year 2024, we welcome 2.6 million visitors, a remarkable 10 percent increase from the previous year, setting records in December that are historic in terms of arrivals in one month. This achievement is no accident. It is a result of deliberate efforts to improve our infrastructure, foster partnerships, and elevate the Virgin Islands as a premier destination. We have not only recovered from the past challenges but have surpassed pre-pandemic visitor levels by 22 percent and increased air arrivals by an astounding 44 percent compared to 2019. The economic impact of this growth is extraordinary. The shared economy contributed 369 million traditional accommodations added another 462 million and cruise tourism generated 258 million 73 million dollars more than last year with an average visitor spend of 166 dollars per day we are the second highest in the Caribbean. The Virgin Islands has cemented this place as a top tier destination. Tourism in the Virgin Islands is about the stories we create, the memories we etch into the hearts of visitors and the immense pride we feel in sharing the rich culture and breathtaking beauty of our home with the world. These accolades bolster our reputation and reaffirm that we are as the Virgin Islands already know our islands, our treasures that continue to captivate and inspire our residents and our visitors. But we are not content to stand on our laurels. Last summer we hosted our inaugural tourism summit. This event provided a platform to examine our strengths, identify areas for growth and chart a path forward that embraces innovation and emerging trends. Since then, imitation being the best form of flattery, our neighbours in the British Virgin Islands have introduced their own tourism summit, inspired by the impact of this leadership. This reflects on the Virgin Islands as a beacon of progress and inspiration in the region. Our partnership with Royal Caribbean is reshaping the future of cruise tourism in our territory. A few years ago, St. Croix welcomed fewer than 60,000 cruise passengers annually, underscoring the untapped potential of the beautiful island. Today's projections for fiscal 2025 show an astonishing increase to 275,000 passengers demonstrating the power of strategic vision.

- 1:24:53 and decisive action to ensure continued momentum we are making transformative investments in our infrastructure the first phase of the daily gregory transportation center opened in april 2024 and the second phase which will open in will open in 2025 sky city vi airports our 3p partnership company is now preparing for the renovations at syruly king on st thomas and the henry rosen on st croix these projects feature expanded terminals advanced baggage systems and jet bridges enhancing the travel experience for visitors and residents alike. Our seaports are also seeing major upgrades. Dredging in Charlotte to Malia will accommodate the larger cruise ships in the industry's future. That is already out of bid and it will be done this year. On St. Croix, the Annie Abramson Marine Facility and Tender Dock improvements are expanding our visitor experience. These investments ensure our ports remain gateways to growth and opportunity. We are revitalizing our downtowns, making them more vibrant and welcoming for residents and visitors. The Veterans Drive Improvement Project and downtown revitalization grants will bring new life to our towns. Partnerships with organizations like the Historic Area Revitalization Project, or HARP, are transforming and re-giving new birth to International Plaza and Royal Dane Mall, turning them into hubs for businesses, culture and leisure, creating spaces that reflect the beauty and potential of our downtown spaces. At the same time, investments are enhancing our tourism offering. The reopening of the Frenchman's Reef and the Bowie House Resort has re-established our territory as a destination for conferences, and we see many this year. This was made possible
- 1:26:45 through an \$84 million bond offering by the PFA to finance this improvement. The soon-to-open Hampton at West Indian Company Limited will add 120 much-needed hotel rooms, the first new hotel construction in the territory in 45 years. The eco-resort at Botany Bay in St. Thomas is set to open later this year, promises to elevate our hospitality sector even further. These developments result from astute policies like the Hotel Development Act, which laid this groundwork for success. But these initiatives are more than about just boosting tourism, they are about creating jobs and building vibrant communities and ensuring that the economy works for everyone. The Virgin Islands is striving not just as a destination, but as a place of opportunity and promise. While our record-breaking tourism numbers showcase incredible achievements, our progress runs much deeper than visitor arrivals. Today the Virgin Islands is setting new benchmarks for success, particularly in our labour market. has reached historic lows, remaining below 4% for unprecedented 14 consecutive months and dropping to a record-breaking 2.9%, the lowest in the history of the Virgin Islands. This is not just an achievement for this administration.
- 1:28:34 It's a testament to the power of bold, sound economic policies and what can be accomplished when we form strategic partnerships with the private sector. Yet we recognize that progress brings its challenges. Our job postings continue to outpace the applicants, highlighting the critical need to align opportunity with workforce and preparation. development has been and will continue to be one of the administration's core priorities because we know that empowering virgin islanders to build a brighter future starts with education training and skill building in september 2025 we will open the virgin islands technical college a game changer This new institution is designed to fill the gap in high demand fields and address the workforce shortages in construction and project management and provide residents with access to higher paying careers. This academy will give our high school students the opportunity to graduate, to graduate with a two-year college degree and other certification while they are in high school at the same time at the same time we remain we remain deeply committed to the university of the virgin islands with our free tuition program that has already provided 4.7 million in scholarships to over 2 thousand students. This initiative, thanks to this legislature, is now extended to part-time students as well and is breaking down financial barriers and unlocking opportunities for all. These investments in education will reshape lives and create generational change by eliminating the weight of student debt, breaking cycles of financial instability, and building a community where prosperity is now within the reach of every virgin islander this is the heart of our workforce development strategy a strategy focused on transforming individual lives and strengthening the economic fabric of our territory strategy a strategy focused on managing today's economy while also planting the seeds for tomorrow speaking of seeds as we continue to improve the
- 1:31:01 lives of our hard-working families across the territory, I am proud to share that progress is being made in implementing the Virgin Islands Cannabis Use Act. In 2024, the Cannabis Advisory Board approved rules and regulations to guide the cannabis industry, and we now have a staffed office with the enforcement unit set to be active next month, February. This dedicated team and the the Board are working tirelessly to ensure the cannabis market is both safe and thriving. Earlier this year, we took significant steps towards reparative justice for individuals convicted of simple possession of marijuana. In September, the Governor's Auto Expungement Task Force, in partnership with the Department of Justice, submitted the first round of expungement applications, and we have already seen some granted. If you believe you qualify for expungement of your criminal record due to marijuana, we encourage you to submit your petition to the Superior Court. Additionally, we have made it easier for medical practitioners, patients and sacramental users to register online with the Office of Cannabis Regulation. As a result, residents who use cannabis for medical purposes are now legally registered and growing their own cannabis at home for their use. This quarter we will open applications for cannabis cultivation

licenses, followed by business licenses for dispensaries. Manufacturers and other sectors within this growing industry will follow suit. We are building a regulated market that ensures a safe and accessible cannabis industry. But as we celebrate the flourishing vitality of tourism and its economy and the invaluable support from federally funded projects, we must also recognize the urgent need to diversify our economic landscape. That is why I was pleased to work with Senator Novell Francis Jr. on the South Shore Trade Zone legislation. In a groundbreaking initiative, the EDA commissioned a comprehensive shipyard feasibility study aimed at seizing a substantial share of the Caribbean's boating repair industry. Establishing a local shipyard will empower the U.S. Virgin Islands to compete effectively in a market that has long been dominated by the British Virgin Islands and by Puerto Rico. This will open the doors for new growth and innovation. The latest step in our plan for the South Shore Trade Zone was to ensure that the tenants were not affected by the challenges to reliable power. Although the Trade Zone legislation allows tenants to produce and sell power within

1:33:41 the zone. Allowing the Water and Power Authority to compete unregulated within the zone would jump start power production. It would guarantee us competitive electrical rates for commercial and it would lower the collective energy price for all because WAPA has more clients. Our administration is deeply committed to laying the groundwork for a transformative era in energy production. We have forged strong alliances with the owners of Port Hamilton Refining and Transportation, federal agencies and key stakeholders, all with a shared vision of evolving this vital facility into something far more than just a refinery. My support is not just for the safe restart of the refinery, but for it to become a model for global energy, embracing advanced technologies, environmental stewardship, and cutting-edge practices that will redefine how energies operate in the 21st century.

1:34:43 The projected impact of Port Hamilton is extraordinary. Once operational, the facility will potentially generate over \$400 million annually, with \$45 million direct to this government. Equally important, it will create 400 well-paying jobs, further boosting the economy of St. Croix and supporting countless families and local businesses. Alongside other projects and development in a trade zone, this project will anchor the Virgin Islands as a hub for innovation, prosperity, and opportunity. As governor, I have never shied away from confronting the challenges that have plagued our community for decades. As I said earlier, time and again, just as we take strides forward on one pressing issue, another emerges to test our resolve. Down WAPA, up waste management. Today, we face a crisis with the Waste Management Authority that demands both urgency and unity. Our community's grappling with aging and failing wastewater infrastructure and literally mounting issues of solid garbage waste.

1:36:00 I acknowledge and commend the Waste Management Authority for the progress they had made in securing coastal zone permits and approvals as planned convenience centres for Cotton Valley, Concordia, Monbijou in St. Croix and Red Oak, Smith Bay and Bornfield in St. Thomas. But we must do more. The waste management has been successful in securing \$3 billion from FEMA, which will replace the entire sewer system in the Virgin Islands, along with address our issues at the dump. Along with the federal funding that we have now for immediate wastewater pump station replacements, we have a path forward. Nevertheless, the lead time for one of these pumps stretches from 12 weeks to six months. So we have to do something about the deterioration of the stormwater that is draining into our sewage system and breaking down our equipment time and time again. It has wreaked havoc in our community, resulting in an untenable situation. The sewer water in our towns and streets is a stark reminder of what is at stake. This is not just an infrastructure problem, but a public health, environmental and economic crisis. The good news is that the funding exists and while the lead time and the parts are long, we are going to get it fixed. Adding to this latest crisis is a fundamental and systemic issue. Waste management has never been adequately funded nor empowered to charge the fees necessary to sustain its operations. Consider this.

1:37:44 Private haulers charge commercial and private entities for their services. Yet we expect the Waste Management Authority to maintain operations, pay its vendors and serve the community without the same ability. How can we reasonably expect them to succeed without the necessary resources? We owe it to our people to act decisively and with courage. The time as the rhetoric has passed, we must now deliver solutions. must be collected, wastewater must flow safely, and vendors must be paid. So, Senators, let us work together with the Public Services Commission to bring a permanent resolution to this issue. This steady growth we are experiencing is supported by construction in government, residential and the private sector. The infrastructure forms a foundation upon which we are building the future of the Virgin Islands. When our administration took offices, we inherited a failing infrastructure. The passage of time coupled with the impact of 30 years of natural disaster has led to significant deterioration. The devastation of our homes, businesses and public infrastructure, our recreational spaces. It has caused the displacement of our population, the closure of businesses and the interruptions of our government functions, and most importantly increased anxiety among our residents. And while federal funding has provided some relief, the simultaneous failure of systems across all three islands creates ongoing emergencies.

- 1:39:31 This past year has been both exciting and productive, but trust me, the inconveniences we are experiencing are also proof of our progress. So when you see orange cones, black roads and barricades, it's a sign that improvements are on the way. We are focused on building a prosperous, sustainable future for the Virgin Islands, not merely restoring the past. unprecedented progress, though difficult, is essential for stronger, more resilient Virgin Islands. These are the throes of change and improvement. When our administration took office in 2019, the territory anticipated receiving \$8 billion. You all remember that in the campaign? \$8 billion. During last year's address, we announced that we were expecting more than \$15 billion.
- 1:40:25 We are proud to share that we have once again surpassed the mark. I want to say this slowly, all federal emergency management administration public assistance projects have been obligated. All, and as of January 2025, \$22.5 billion have been pledged to restore our Virgin Islands. Our efforts to maintain the recovery gained a much appreciated boost last year. I think was one of the most tremendous things to happen last year. The Biden-Harris administration, after they said it couldn't be done, granted a reduction in a local match from 10% to as low as 2% for our projects. Projects that will rebuild schools and hospitals and facilities.
- 1:41:38 Without this vehicle, our recovery would not be possible. It would require the territory to find \$2 billion in cash to spend the \$20 million available in FEMA funds. Ladies and gentlemen, this was no easy feat. And it was made possible by our team and our administration, our lobbyists in Washington, a team in D.C. urging two U.S. presidents and several cabinet members for relief. Last year, I announced that the Office of Disaster Recovery is focused on initiating the larger, more complex projects under the Rebuild USVI initiative. Never before has there been a time in our territory's history where we had to manage multiple projects of this magnitude. There's no playbook. We had to meet the unique challenge and expand our capacity tonight we can announce that we kept our promise to establish the super project management office to streamline the execution of projects we released four bundles of solicitation for projects worth four billion and successfully secured obligations for all fixed cost projects by the September 30th, 2024 deadline.
- 1:43:05 We already got, before this started, we already had a billion in projects on the go, but now the Super FPMO is executing a contract for the first bundle of St. Thomas School facilities, which include Yvonne E. M. Bowski Elementary, Emmanuel Benjamin Oliver Elementary, Ivanaidora Kinn High School, Janie Tewitt Elementary School, Lockhart Elementary School, and St. Thomas Administrative Center. Bid evaluation for the St. John bundle, which is comprised of the first ever public pre-K through 12 school on the island, the Morris F. DeCastro Clinic as well as the Myra Keating-Smith Community Health Center is underway. This is in addition to the ongoing design-build contracts already in place for Charlotte Amali High School, Arthur Richards and Bertha C. Bushalta Elementary Schools. By the end of 2025, this administration will have over 10 schools under construction contracts.
- 1:44:11 These state-of-the-art facilities will not only enhance academic environments, but will serve as symbol of our commitment to the future. Arthur Richards, our first new school construction is over 50% complete. We expect students to be in class August of 2026. The bundle for horizontal projects, which encompasses all the power lines, water lines and wastewater and grounding system, along with the road repair and damage improvements for the north side of St. Croix, is in the biddy evaluation stage. Health care projects on St. Croix are moving forward. The demolition of Charles Howard Memorial Complex has been completed, and the new Donna M. Christensen Department of Health Building in Richmond is scheduled to begin construction this year. The Governor Juan F. Louis Hospital is scheduled for demolition by the end of 2025, and Roy Lester Snyder is out to bid this first quarter of 2025. We have made remarkable progress, remarkable progress, and we've made it also in modernizing our roadways and addressing challenges that have persisted for years. Segments of Queen Mary Highway and Northside Road have been newly paved. continues on a segment of Melvin Evans Highway between Good Hope and Williams Delight, where long-awaited street lights are finally being installed, improving safety and reliability for our drivers. The Clifton Hill Connector project is nearing completion and will be ready by summer 2025. To the residents of Hannah's Rest, your roads will be repaved once we finish the WAPA water lines and that project that we're working there. In Christianstead Town, nearly every major road has been paved making it easier for residents and businesses to connect and drive looking ahead we have issued finally issued a notice to proceed reconstructing the Ethel McIntosh Memorial Drive Mahogany Road you guys could stop emailing me now next month we will break ground on this long overdue project alongside rehabilitation project for strand King and Queen streets in in Frederickstead, in St. Thomas, St. John, the significant road improvements have brought relief and renewed convenience to many communities. Key routes such as those in Botany Bay, Estate, Fortuna and Caprita Point. And the First Avenue drainage project designed to alleviate flooding and protect homes and businesses is progressing smoothly and set to be completed this year.
- 1:46:57 This project is running so smoothly you don't even hear any complaints in the paper. We are now paving portions, if you didn't came in here tonight, of Veterans Drive and rehabilitating the entire Fort Christian parking lot to include water and

electrical infrastructure in time for carnival activities. On St. John, work continues on Central Line, Fish Fry and the Johnny Horn Trail, which we have in the design phase, and bridges. And I didn't even mention the East Airport and the West Airport Road. Bridge projects have been critical in St. Croix as we address aging infrastructure that has gone decades without significant attention.

- 1:47:37 I am proud to report that the Altona Lagoon and Queen Mary Highway bridges on St. Croix are now complete and open to the public. The bridge at East Airport Road will open within the next 30 days, and construction on Midland Road and bridge repairs to Route 669 near the Rudy-Schuldebrand Agricultural Grounds in St. Croix are well underway, with both being expected to be completed before June. In November 2024, the 35th Legislature approved 156 million Garvey bond issuance proposed by this administration, a record we went from thought to approval in less than 60 days.
- 1:48:34 I want to extend my sincere gratitude to the members of the 35th who supported this visionary initiative which represents a generational investment in our transportation infrastructure this bond issuant will allow for 48 million dollar investment to fund the completion of phase two of the veterans drive project 28 million dedicated to repaving major roadways in st croix including the la valley road i hear you don't nail the valley and 20 million for the design and fabrication and delivery of the long-awaited, the St. Croix St. Thomas passenger vehicle ferry. These projects, these projects will create jobs. This is in addition to the 22 billion I just talked about. These are other projects. These projects will create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and strengthen connections across our districts. But our transportation improvements also extend to our blue economy, further enhancing connectivity and access. The spirit of 1733, a new 300 passenger ferry will soon connect St. John and St. Thomas. Designed to meet the unique condition of our waters, the vessel is in its final stages of fabrication. It was named based on input from our community. The spirit of 733 is a welcome addition to our transportation system. We had so many boats come this year we can't even keep up with the boat christenings. We added another two patrol boats for DPNR and two more for the Virgin Islands Police Department and one fire boat for the fire service bolstering our marine enforcement efforts. What our commitment
- 1:50:32 our community extends further as cemetery improvements are also underway thanks to Lieutenant Governor Roach's persistence construction of a new wall. The Lieutenant Governor mean he was going to get this done. A new wall around Western Cemetery number three on St. Thomas has begun. Additionally, new columbarium and mausoleums at Eastern Cemetery provide much-needed capacity, and ensure dignity for our people. In St. Croix, we have finally added a new veterans section in the Kings Hill Cemetery.
- 1:51:12 We have completed building the mausoleums and crypts for our veterans. These efforts reflect our belief that every resident deserves respect in life as well as in death, underscoring our dedication to serving the needs of this community. Finally, progress continues with our street addressing initiative. It is now complete on St. John and illuminated highway signs are being installed territory-wide, enhancing safety and accessibility for residents and visitors alike.
- 1:51:52 But even though these are positive developments and really impressive numbers, The people of the U.S. Virgin Islands continue to face considerable challenges. Like the rest of the nation's Virgin Islands household have really felt the burden of unprecedented inflation. I often listen to the news and listen to mainland Americans complain about the prices of food and just laugh to myself. They have no idea what the people of the Virgin Islands go through. We have seen inflation of up to 14 percent in a single year. And although it seems to be leveling off a little bit, it doesn't seem to be going down. We remain hopeful that our national leaders can assist in lowering our collective cost of living. But as an administration, we have faced this problem head on and continue to seek ways to ease the burden on households.
- 1:52:53 Most notable is our effort to keep the energy bills from increasing. We have faced criticism and public browbeating on this issue. We have spent over \$100 million in federal and local funds to assure that we keep local power rates the same. The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority has been a point of frustration for as long as anyone can remember. On April 22, 2024, I declared a state of energy emergency.
- 1:53:26 This declaration was not made lightly. As Governor, I knew I had to act swiftly to mitigate the potential of a staggering rate increase by the Water and Power Authority, should it become insolvent and have to go to our receiver. Since the declaration, we have remained current in our central government obligations, as as well as paying the debts owed to WAPA by both hospitals and the Waste Management Authority. This past year, we successfully negotiated and closed the deal on the two propane facilities, eliminating a \$140 million debt and adding a \$180 million asset to the authority's balance sheet.
- 1:54:08 This move ensured that we could continue using propane, cheaper and cleaner than diesel oil. I want to thank the team at the PFA of Washington, Council and team, Squire, Patton, Boggs, Winston and Strawn, HUD, the Housing Finance Authority, Disaster Recovery and VTOL for their invaluable contributions. It was a five-year work in progress. A major step forward was the introduction of new leadership at WAPA. Many doubted my decision to offer my Chief of Staff to

lead the authority. As often with the critics, they tend to view every hire through a political lens rather than a professional one. This was not a job he initially sought. It was an opportunity I strongly urge him to take at the expense of my administration. I knew his expertise and leadership would benefit WAPA, its employees and the people of the Virgin Islands. Earlier this month, we celebrated the long-awaited unveiling of the watch cellar generators for St. Thomas and St. John. The project added 36 megawatts of power to the grid, along with 9 megawatts of battery power. After an almost 15-year effort, we now have smaller, more efficient generators running online at the Randolph-Hawley Power Plant. It has been a long and challenging and a graying road, but we are finally turning the corner transforming WAPA into a renewable company. This past December, we cut the ribbon on 16 megawatts of pure solar power and battery backup in St. Croix. This solar power is already in use, powering homes and businesses as we speak. I know it dark, but the battery demand. In addition, we will be cut we will be cutting the ribbon in may for another 20 megawatts in hugginsburg frederick shed bringing the sole total solar power generation in st croix to 41 megawatts matching the daily peak usage required on the island they said it couldn't be done but together we made it happen

- 1:56:41 If that wasn't impressive enough, WAPA is purchasing this power between 8 and 11 cents per kilowatt hour compared to 21 cents a cost to generate with fossil fuels. We're not going to talk about lowering the carbon footprint because that's huge as well. We want to thank Christian Loranger who is in here tonight and VIA Electron for not only building these solar fields, they not only build them, but then they turn them over to a non-profit organization run by Virgin Islanders for perpetu...perpetu...perpetu...perpetu...perpetu... Perpetuity! Christian!
- 1:57:25 Come on, come on, come on! I also want to thank the Public Service Commission, the PSC, Michael senior staff and our team at WAPA for making this all possible. So while the prices of milk, chicken, rent, eggs, gas, interest rates have risen, your WAPA rates have remained the same. In fact, the cost per kilowatt hour is lower now than when we took office six years ago.
- 1:58:04 The investments we are making and the hard work we're doing, they're paying off. But just as I have ensured no price increase under my administration, we will not rest until we can pass these accomplishments in the form of reduced rates to the consumer. That's the point. Keep it on. Keep it cheap. But we can't rush it. WAPA still has to resolve the financial hole it dug for itself over the many decades.
- 1:58:42 Our neighbours right here in Puerto Rico, they welcome 2025 in darkness. Wake up no power. So we have to remain vigilant and in our goal to fix WAPA together, to prevent the authority from relapsing into its previous state of disarray. I see a future where WAPA is interconnected with the refinery, with some power generation on the south shore of St. Croix. And thanks to recent FEMA obligation of \$661 million for the replacement of the power plant in St. Croix and an additional \$206 million for new efficient generation in St. Thomas, I am committed to improving the grid infrastructure to the point where it is on and cheap. Our efforts not only address current challenges, but also pave the way for affordable and renewable energy. And while we seek to put WAPA on financial footing, our real goal is to create energy independence for as many households as we can.
- 1:59:50 Last year, we closed on the first 1% solar loans being administered by the Economic Development Authority and the Virgin Islands Energy Office. These loans allow residents to install solar systems and finance them through their WAPA bill. We have also made sizable investments in transforming the government fleet from fuel-driven automobiles to hybrid and electric vehicles. In order to make EV purchases more attractive, we have also installed eight free charging stations with 26 more scheduled by the summer of 2025. Likewise, homeowners are now taking advantage of low-cost energy loans to install batteries and solar systems to their homes. I would like to remind people as they are struggling that there is still rent and mortgage assistance available through the COVID relief. But through the efforts of this administration, we have secured \$150 million in grants that will be used to subsidize batteries for your home, solar systems for your businesses, erecting power charging stations for cars, and replacing them old faulty appliances that whopper mess up.
- 2:01:00 Our government is leading the charge in this energy revolution. We strive to create efficiency at every turn. Every turn. And while many complain about the cost of government, we have fewer employees now than we had 20 years ago with 10 times the work. Salaries and fringe are the greatest increase in the budget. Let me say it again. Salaries and fringe are the greatest increase in the budget, which have risen over 25% since we took office. Not only, listen again, not only have we increased salaries but we have actually paid them is that novel we have honored every single contract that i have signed over the last six years complete with retroactive pay if applicable which includes the ones i inherited when i first took office today the starting salary for a teacher is over fifty thousand dollars and the average salary and the average salary for teachers is sixty one thousand dollars in the virgin islands our nurses in our hospital are starting at seventy thousand dollars we have absorbed the rising costs of health insurance over the last five years rather than pass it on to the employees this will be the first fiscal year since being elected that Increased insurance costs will actually be shared, however, the government has assumed the greatest part of that burden as well. We continue to keep pace and pay out

overdue tax refunds, and we are catching up. In the last four months alone, we've paid \$42 million in returns to filers, bringing refunds paid to individuals who have filed up to April 25, 2023. Since taking our The Staking Office of Administration has paid over \$396 million in income tax refunds. This February, for the first time, Virgin Islanders will be able to file their income

2:03:06 tax returns online, another major accomplishment. For us, giving people back their money, timely, is a priority. We have paid back the 8%, raised salaries, absorbed health care costs, paid \$42 million in retro and committed \$3 billion in public funds to ensuring the solvency of the government employees' retirement system. We have sacrificed and paid out \$40 million annually in general fund contribution to ensure that our retirees continue to collect a system, remember, a system that would have been completely out of cash today. We must recognize that this \$3 billion and all this money that we pledged, that money would have paved roads and repaired schools and fixed waste management issues and provided more funds to deal with our healthcare system. We diverted the money to ensure that our seniors and our retirees and our future retirees would keep getting their checks monthly. But people, please remember, 70% of our taxpayers don't work for the government and don't get the benefit of that three billion dollars initially. So yes, yes, I understand the retro pay is owed. And I know it is needed. And we want to pay it. This is a 40-year-old debt that we still owe over 120 million dollars on. But we have to spread the wealth around and ensure that all our residents benefit from our tax roll, not just government employees. And yes, I'll take the blame.

2:04:50 I made the promise that we would pay at least \$25 million a year in retro. But between keeping the lights on and tackling inflation, we simply cannot afford to pay it using the general fund. But Senators, we can't pay it from the proceeds from the lawsuits we settled. Instead of building yet another gymnasium in Estate Nazareth, right next to the gymnasium in Ivana-e-Dorekent High School, we could take that 20 million and pay our retirees today. That is not an obligation. That's 20 million in cash in the bank right now.

2:05:40 As I've said many times before, we have 22 billion dollars of projects. We don't need any more projects. Let us use this money to address our inflation woes and our obligation to our retirees and forgo this gymnasium. It is not all, but it is a step in the right direction. Let's show the people of the Virgin Islands that we can work together on this. Send me the bill and I will pay the retro immediately. As we focus on addressing immediate needs like inflation and supporting our retirees, we must also consider how we can further help our communities. One area that requires our attention is ensuring families have access to nutrition and food they need. People are struggling to put food on the table every day. We are doing everything we can to address this by increasing food pantries and providing assistance whenever possible.

2:06:45 I would like to remind you of all the assistance we are given, we continue to pour money into our community. To further support our local families, the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services chose to raise the income limit for SNAP, or food stamps as we call it. So it went from 130% of the poverty limit to 175% of the poverty limit. This increase allowed more families to receive benefits, expanding access to those who need it most.

2:07:22 We went from receiving \$85 million a year in food stamping COVID to \$55 million. That's the impact on families that we are feeling now. Parallel to what Human Services is doing with SNAP, the efforts that licensing and consumer also share in this effort. The department is sharing the data to empower consumers to make the best choices. The market basket and the fuel surveys are essential tools for price transparency and consumer protection. Most of all, these surveys track the cost of essential goods in the territory, empowering our residents to find the best deals and forcing these suppliers to compete for customers with the best price.

2:08:10 At the close of this fiscal year, 2024, Human Services distributed more than \$21 million in child care stabilization grants and \$7 million in quality improvement mini-grants. The stabilization grants provided crucial financial support to child care providers, helping them cover operational costs like wages, utilities, rent and insurance. And the mini-grants allow providers to fund standby generator purchases and give professional development opportunities with health and safety enhancements and playground equipment. Supporting these childcare providers is a vital investment because we are subsidizing their operations to lower their costs, allowing them to pass those savings on to families. By investing in childcare industry, we are helping families drive and easing financial pressure on households. Last year, we began construction on six Head Start facilities. The Cruise Bay Head Start is completed.

2:09:20 And by September 2025, all the remaining centers will be ready to welcome our kids into the territory. I would also like to congratulate Lutheran Social Services for opening up their state-of-the-art early Head Start facility in Este Concordia East. Department of Human Services is not only addressing poverty through SNAP benefits and investment in child care and Head Start, but also by revitalizing its buildings and improving its programs. We are set to invest 200 million in long-term care centers for St. Croix and St. Thomas. That's a replacement of of Herbert Grigg and Lucinda and Queen Louise, \$126 million to restore Newt Hanson and we've already put in about \$2.5 million and upgrading the St. John Multipurpose Center. We're continuing to fight inflation, especially in the housing market, where it's becoming harder

justifying insurance, much less buy or bill a house. We've allocated \$25 million in grants through the VI SLICE program and increased the grant cap for the Envision program to \$400,000 per home. I'm happy to report that both programs are making progress in helping Virgin Islanders secure homes. From the inception of SLICE, 39 applicants have been approved totaling \$3.4 million dollars in financing. This past year the program issued 16 grants totaling over 1.4 million to 16 homeowners. These are not loans these are grants to first-time homebuyers as high as \$90,000. This is unmatched in the country there's no program that is similar to this and this this helps Virgin

2:11:13 Islanders to buy, build, renovate homes. Unlike many of the federal programs, it allows them to purchase, construct and you can also have a rental unit in the home, creating a source of income for residents. The Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority has worked tirelessly to help the residents achieve the dream of home ownership. The program continues to be an excellent tool for first-time home ownership in the Virgin Islands. The Envision program, the much-disputed and feared Envision program. To rebuild severely storm-damaged homes has finally got legs, thanks to ODR. Last year, we told you we were transferring from the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority into the Office of Disaster Recovery, and it has paid dividends. The Envision Tomorrow Teams is currently tracking 100 homes in the construction phase.

2:12:18 And we expect another 150 this year. It's almost a 400% increase in activity since we transferred the programs. Homeowners in the rental rehabilitation program will also see progress this year as ODR anticipates getting the first patch of those homes into construction by August. That's a program where we give you up to \$50,000 to \$100,000 per apartment unit to create affordable housing. Tonight I want to recognize Ms. Vernell Stevens, Ms. Adelaide Andrew and Ms. Kay Francis as three homeowners who exercise tremendous patience and we have been able to assist them to get you back to your home.

2:13:00 Mr. Stevens and Ms. Andrew are here with us tonight. Thank you, thank you for your patience. It's not easy when water running in your house every time it rains. In another effort to bolster home ownership, the Own a Lot Build a Home program is in full swing alongside Bank of Popular and Rural Development. opportunity provides \$250,000 in grant funding to allow first-time homeowners to build their dream homes on their land. You may be asking what the difference is. It's the income limits. One is a federal program with income limits and one doesn't have income limits. That's strict. Perhaps the most significant development in homeownership in the last 20 years was accomplished last quarter in the st thomas st john district we know home ownership is the biggest hurdle for our people especially in st john forget about it but my administration along with the jackson development company and the housing finance authority is providing home ownership opportunities to 315 families this consists of conversion of previous rental housing units from rental home to ownership residence. For those residents in Bellevue Village, Calabash Boom, on Lovingland, I want to congratulate you on your first step to home ownership.

2:14:42 And for those who choose not to purchase or are unable to buy the unit, the option to remain a renter will be there at the same rent. In 2024, we also completed the renovation at the Walter I.M. Hodge community, consisting of 248 units across 21 buildings with a senior centre. A great achievement. If you see this place, it is like something out of a movie. Beautiful. It's a great achievement, but there's so much more work to do. Our downtown areas were once social and economic hubs teeming with families and commercial activity.

2:15:19 It is frustrating to drive past collapsing buildings. Collapsing buildings like the Apothecary Hall and the building across from where the Durand Tower used to be. Our people need housing. Revitalizing our downtowns presents an opportunity to create new and additional housing while restoring the blight and creating economic activity to these areas. The Abandoned and Derelict Building Act we submitted to the last year is a first step to returning your downtowns to their former glory. I know they are difficult decisions, but Senators, we have to move on our downtowns before they crumble completely into dust.

2:16:00 As we move forward, we are not only building, rebuilding our infrastructure, but also preserving our natural heritage, which directly impacts the wellbeing of our people. So, after 54 years, I want you to note how long it's taken us to get stuff accomplished in the Virgin Islands, and we're getting them done in this administration. After 54 years and several worthwhile attempts, we have achieved the historic milestone of adopting the territory's first comprehensive land and water use plan with the signing of 89-81.

2:16:42 In addition, our people have been working, in addition we got a \$69 million NOAA grant which will expand the territorial park system that we established a couple years ago, adding over 2,700 acres, including Maroon Ridge, Estate Perseverance and Most of Mount Equal, to protect our green spaces in perpetuity. This expansion will offer residents greater access to natural spaces, promoting recreation, mental well-being and environmental stewardship. Similarly, the Department of Agriculture, through a forestry grant, is moving forward with the purchase of 91 acres on Inner Brass Key over in St. Thomas. Once complete, that will also be added to the park system. By the end of this year, our administration

would have performed the largest acquisition of land and property for the people of the Virgin Islands in history.

- 2:17:51 had to leave things out of here. We also bought Diageo and Island Block. But you can't say everything in a report, right? But while buildings and living spaces are important, perhaps one of our most formidable threats is the overall health of our community. On a panel last year, we highlighted the chronic illnesses that plague us and our resistance to taking the medication and the exercise we need to keep living. We are fully committed to fostering a healthy living because as we know the sound body is the best. It's the best investment. We've inspired our people to get back outside and embrace a more active and vibrant way of life. The Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation is working diligently to complete recovery repairs territory-wide. And St. Thomas renovations have been completed at Emil Griffith, Alvin McBean, Joseph O'Bain and Kerwin Terrace Ballparks. These parks now feature LED lighting, batting cages, bleachers, scoreboards and perimeter fencing. In partnership with Sail and Surf, the Ezra Frederick Ballpark and Frieden Hoy. You know the one that looks like a real bother on the side? It will be transformed into a multi-use recreational facility. Activities will include playground and a new skate park. We broke Brown this month.
- 2:19:18 This past year, we celebrated the reopening of two significant recreational facilities on St. John, with the Orville Brown basketball court and the Cruz Bay tennis court. They stand as physical symbols of our progress. Meanwhile in St. Croix, games are now being held at the Rudy Krieger Complex and D.C. Canigata Little League Park, which has rebuilt dugouts and lighting, and the construction at the Renhold Jackson Park in Wim will be completed by March of this year, bringing baseball and softball back to the west side of St. Croix. This past year we celebrated the reopening of newly reconstructed pavilions at Kramers Park Beach. These new pavilions with grills and fencing, walkways and picnic tables will be utilized for years to come for class reunion, battle of the agencies and weekend outings. These pavilions symbolize more than just shelter. They represent a commitment to building back better and providing an enhancement beach and experience for residents. The Vincent Mason Pool renovation project in Frederickstead remains on track to be completed by the beginning of summer, just in time for swimming lessons.
- 2:20:32 While we continue to feel exasperated, exasperated ain't a word, with the current contractor, We can finally see the end of the tunnel is hazy for the Pali Joza Stadium project. I mean, making sure our community has facilities to be active and play with their children and live their best healthy lives is a priority for us. We have plans to install 16 new playgrounds across the territory, ensuring safe and engaging play areas for our children. We're also making upgrades to Medrick Cummins or the much worn park fencing and all the mulch in there and lighting improvements. All of these things we're doing to make sure that our kids and our families have inexpensive and safe places to play. When I said last year we would have carnival races again at Clinton E5 racetrack, many doubted. I knew in my heart what it meant for our community to have the resumption of horse racing. Indeed the community was overwhelmed with excitement and it came out in record numbers to support our jockeys and horse enthusiasts. With the commitment of dedication of Southland Gaming and Department of Sports Parks and Recreation, the thunder of hoof beef have been heard in four race cards in six months. It should be evident.
- 2:22:02 By this time, it should be evident to everyone, we've done everything we can do, that VIGL does not have the wherewithal nor the resources to rebuild the track. Today, the Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against VIGL for the breach of a contract. We have the resources. We already have \$12 million on our own. And we, the government, can rebuild the Randall Dock-James track and restore horse racing to St. Croix.
- 2:22:40 The Department of Health continues to tackle health disparities by expanding access to care. Another remarkable thing that happened last year. Through the Department of Defence Innovative Readiness Training Program, program, we welcome over 300 military medical professionals to the Virgin Islands, our largest health event in the history. The USVI Wellness Fair went on for seven days. They delivered \$2.25 million in free medical service, no charge, to our residents, impacting over 2,100 individuals across three islands. The health fair is scheduled to return this summer to provide expanded no-cost services for our residents including dental care, optometry, medical screenings, pediatric physicals and vaccinations. Residents will again have access to routine physical and emergency exams, teeth cleanings, fillings and extractions, as well as assessments for blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and mental wellness. We have also completed the USVI Cancer Plan, the first comprehensive guide to address our territory's cancer burden. This plan also aims to reduce incidences of mortality rates and alleviate the economic burden of care. Bolstering our commitment to combat cancer, Charlotte Kimmelin Cancer Institute remains on schedule for a November 2025 completion date.
- 2:24:15 In the meantime, we have granted over \$300,000 in assistance to non-profits that help families travel abroad for care so that they could travel at cost of travel expenses and housing. We look forward to resuming the much-needed oncology services for the people of the Virgin Islands and patients from our neighbouring islands. In October 2024, Snyder Regional Medical Centre celebrated a significant milestone with the grand opening of its newly expanded hemodialysis unit. The hemodialysis unit is the only facility in the region with a four-star rating, reflecting its exceptional care.

Through the support of a \$2 million grant from my administration, dialysis patients in this St. Croix district can now receive service at the Virgin Islands Healthcare Foundation renal centre, its location in Sunny Isles. The CMS-certified 12-chair facility has the capability of serving up to 78 patients weekly. The opening of the nationally-affiliated dialysis centre will increase accessibility and fill this significant gap in health care. We are making progress with improving the state of health care in our territory. JFL North is now online. There were apparent gaps in the form and function of this interim facility. We had to purchase another five acres that had and leased warehouse space and parking lot. We also recall the vital services that were affected during the hurricanes, after the hurricanes, causing our dialysis patients to be relocated to the mainland. Subsequently, patients were receiving care in trailers. This summer, JFL will transition into its dialysis unit to a brick and mortar facility. But let's face it, the challenges of providing health care existed before the storms, and it will continue after, until we address the issue of the tremendous uncompensated care

2:26:13 burden in our territory. The solution will require legislation and collaboration between our two branches of government and our health care institutions to create some kind of inclusive, mandatory health insurance for everybody, with workers and employees contributing. It has to be done. We simply can't afford to give everybody care for free. We've made tremendous progress in increasing our Medicaid cap. Working with the delegate, we've got it now that we only pay 17% of the match, but it's not enough. We are meeting the challenges facing our territory head on, starting with the well-being of our children. We are committed to strengthening our child protection programs, to safeguard and strengthen the most vulnerable among us.

2:27:07 The growing social and emotional struggles faced by school-aged children demand our attention. At the same time, we must stand firm against those who threaten the safety and the innocence of our youth. There is no place for such individuals or those who condone them in our community. We will continue to protect our children and ensure that our homes and our schools have the support they need. This last decade has brought tumultuous change for all of us, especially in the lives of our young Virgin Islanders. Yet in the face of this reality, they continue to adapt, persevere and rise above the challenges before them. Our students are not just overcoming, They are excelling. The Department of Education is championing students' success with targeted initiative approaches that celebrate our unique identity and equip our youth for global competitiveness. Virgin Island students are now learning from a groundbreaking VI-centric civics textbook, fostering a deep understanding of national and local governments. Programs like the Film and Writing Academies empower our students to tell their stories of uncertainty and triumph, while the planned addition of the new STEAM centers in both districts introduce cutting-edge technology such as 3D printers, opening doors to careers in science and technology, engineering and arts.

2:28:33 The excellence of our school has not gone unnoticed. U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona hailed the 2024 National Blue Ribbon Schools as raising the bar for our students. Last year, three of our schools were recognized as beacons of innovation and achievement. I want to congratulate our very own Ricardo Richards Elementary School as being recognized as a national Blue Ribbon School. Our students' academic performance underscores this progress. Since 2021, we have seen significant improvements in the annual assessments for science, reading and math, key pillars of lifelong success. In science, our students moved from 45% to 64%. This is a 40% increase in student performance at or near grade level. These gains are mirrored by results on the Smarter Balanced assessment with an increase of 49% in English language arts and math proficiency, demonstrating the transformative impact of a focused and passionate Department of Education. But this progress, this progress would not be possible without the extraordinary dedication of our teachers, those who inspire, ignite curiosity and change lives every day. like Miss Cherise C. Davis, St. Croix District Teacher of the Year, and Mr. Coronel Hanley, St. Thomas St. John, Teacher of the Year, embody this commitment.

2:30:28 Their passion is matched by Andre Douglas, I've actually been to his classroom, of Ivana in Dorian High School, who efforts to make, get this, mathematics palatable, enjoyable and memorable. It earned him the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Andre Douglas, ladies and gentlemen. Change, progress and transformation are sparked by learning and ignited by teaching. These sparks become a flame of innovation and inspiration when fueled by environments that nurture growth. Through the Bureau of School Construction and Maintenance, which was launched this past summer, we are working to ensure every child has a safe, functional space to learn and grow. From replacing air-conditioned units and addressing roof repairs, drainage and sewage issues, we are transforming our schools into places where students and educators can thrive. Education is the foundation of progress, but for our people to thrive, they must grow up in communities where safety is not a hope but a guarantee. While we celebrate the achievement of our students, we cannot ignore the growing threat of crime and fear that undermine their potential and disrupt all of our futures. That's why we're investing in community programs and investing in expanding support for youth and creating pathways for healing.

- 2:32:03 We are taking bold and decisive steps toward a safer and more just Virgin Islands. The Virgin Islands Police Department is transforming with critical upgrades in infrastructure and cutting-edge technology like traffic light enforcement systems and the e-citation project. That's right people, your tickets coming in the mail. Better stop running them red lights. Email. These innovations pair with 180 new surveillance cameras. We're watching you. This is strengthening our community trust and enhancing our ability to protect and serve. And as we work tirelessly to make a community safer, we continue to strengthen our law enforcement efforts. Recently, we welcomed 32 Virgin Islands Police Academy graduates. Each of these individuals undergone extensive training and is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our citizens. We will continue to leverage both advanced technology and human intelligence to combat crime and protect our communities. the work we are doing today will lay the foundation for a safer tomorrow.
- 2:33:12 But despite our best efforts, 44 homicides occurred in 2024. We had seven homicides from January to June and 37 from July to December. Breaking this cycle requires more than just line enforcement. It demands urgent, decisive action in prevention, intervention and healing, but on the prosecution from the Department of Justice has taken a firm stance against violent and white-collar crime. Reflecting our determination to address this serious issue head-on, in 2024, 33 homicide cases were prosecuted. Although the prosecution of homicides often lags due to the complexity of investigation and trials, The AG remains committed to bringing justice to the victims and their families.
- 2:34:04 In addition to homicides, we are prioritizing domestic violence and mental health-related offenses and the illegal possession of firearms. Our Department of Justice is also spearheading efforts to work with the judiciary for the backlog, improve collaboration with the VIPD, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and Superior Court judges in moving cases along. The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency earned an Emergency Management Accreditation Program certification in October. If anybody knows about emergency management, it's us, right? This milestone comes on the heels of another challenging year, marked by Tropical Storm Ernesto, the boats on the waterfront still reminding us it passed. We are deeply grateful to former President Biden for granting our request for a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration. We greatly aided our efforts in responding to the storm's damages. These achievements reflect our ongoing commitment to strengthening emergency response capabilities in the face of increasing challenge and climate change. change. This milestone is particularly significant because it makes us the first territory to get this certification. So to support our emergency efforts along with this certification, we also secured another \$161 million from the Bureau of Information Technology to make sure that our communication infrastructure is good, further enhancing our preparedness for future emergency.
- 2:35:50 But all this support and all the things that I mentioned can only be paid for and sustained based on the fiscal health of the territory. The government finances. Tonight I wish to express my gratitude again for the establishment of a \$50 million line of credit to help manage the government's finances. This line of credit is a financial tool that any billion-dollar government should have at its disposal. Given the cyclical nature of revenue collection, this line has already proven invaluable in assisting with vendor obligations. I am proud to report tonight that we have utilized \$25 million out of the line to pay outstanding obligations. I want to be clear, though. We have the resources to pay our bills, manage our costs, and maintain a balanced budget. But as in all management and budget operation, we must make prudent choices.
- 2:36:46 Legislature? I get it. As politicians, we know that our people appreciate buildings for a lot longer than they appreciate retro pay, 8% paybacks and salary increases. These structures stand as long-lasting reminders of our individual contribution to our communities. But Senators, let's use these proceeds from recently settled lawsuits that are in cash to settle our old debts rather than create new debts. We already have over \$20 billion in construction.
- 2:37:21 Let us use this money to put our finances in order. There's trouble brewing. The rum cover-over is crucial to sustaining the vibrancy of this Virgin Islands economy and the payment of our matching fund bonds. ongoing funding uncertainty threatens the solvency of our pension system. In 2024, in conjunction with the Delegate, we work hard, advocating aggressively lobbying Congress to permanently set the cover-over rate at 1325. But to no avail. This remains a top priority for this administration.
- 2:37:57 And this new Congress, hopefully the gridlock eases and we can have positive action to restore the rum cover over to the rate. This is why our official visits to Washington, D.C. are so important. Many issues remain on our federal radar to address our need for additional workers, changes to the tax code, our treatment by the U.S. National Park Service, immigration and border security, as well as a safe restart to the refinery in St. Croix. But all our progress, all our hard fought victories can be undone by the actions or inactions of just a few. This year our community has been confronted with painful truth as accusations of corruption have shaken both the private and the public sectors, within and beyond our government.

- 2:38:56 As your governor, the reality has weighed very heavily on me. I have poured over policies, scrutinized procedures, reviewed codes of conduct, and examined indictments searching for the fault lines that allow these things to happen. Now some may seize this moment to paint the entire Brian Roach administration with a brush of corruption. And let me be clear, my concern is not for our reputation alone. My fear is that these accusations will cast a shadow over the character of all Virgin Islanders, whether they serve in public office or across business institutions in daily life. I firmly reject this narrative.
- 2:39:44 We are people of integrity, resilience and faith, hardworking individuals committed to creating better lives for our families and communities. What defines us should never be limited to the actions of any one group. In my reflections on this, I've come to a sobering reality. No policy, no procedure, no code of conduct can entirely guard against human weakness.
- 2:40:24 Trust is the foundation of government. And when that trust is violated, it plants a toxic seed of doubt. As your governor, alongside my administration, I am steadfast in my commitment to uproot this mistrust and restore faith in our institutions. Let me say unequivocally, we will have zero tolerance for corruption in any form in this administration.
- 2:41:03 Today, I have signed into existence a new comprehensive code of ethics. Corruption, whether it manifests itself as theft, fraud, or the misappropriations of funds, is a cancer that threatens the very lifeblood of our community. Our charge is to protect government resources. To fortify our defenses, we have built a framework for transparency and accountability that is stronger than ever before. We have implemented clear and competitive bidding processes. We've modernized procurement legislation. We require transparency from the government of the Virgin Islands for all our projects. We have enforced strict bonding requirements and upheld standards for environmental, archaeological and historic preservation, ensuring every project is not only legally compliant but aligned with our environmental and sustainability goals. These measures are not just symbolic, they reflect our unwavering commitment to integrity and ethical leadership. Further, the Division of Personnel has now implemented mandatory training for government employees, including members of my Cabinet on the principles of ethical governance. This effort is bolstered by the updated Code of Conduct, replacing an executive order dating back to 1961, that was 64 years ago. Our administration is determined to emerge from this chapter stronger, more transparent and more resilient.
- 2:42:42 Together we are building a legacy of trust and accountability that will define the Virgin Islands for generations to come. Let this moment be, let this moment be a turning point. Not just for our government, but for the collective conscience of our community. Our journey has never been about building monuments. It has always been about changing the mindset, lives and futures of all Virgin Islanders, as well as shaping the course of these islands. The key theme of my administration has been persistence, staying the course no matter the challenges. In less than 25 years, we will celebrate 200 years of emancipation. In just eight years, we will mark 300 years since the St. John revolt of 1733. And in three years, we will honor the 150th anniversary of the fire burn. In 1917, when America was on the rise, our fate seemed uncertain. Yet within 10 years of that transfer, we had gained American citizenship.
- 2:43:48 And in less than 50 years, we achieved self-governance. Despite how far we have come, we still have much to do. In just a few months, we will gather for our sixth constitutional convention. Let this be the final time we go through this process. We must create a new, inclusive constitution that reflects who we are as a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and multi-denominational people living proudly under the stars and stripes. I remain concerned about how we continue to delay our full potential and prosperity we have worked hard to build.
- 2:44:39 Opportunities to break free from poverty and improve our lives are here. Yet too many of us seem either unprepared, unwilling or just afraid to take action. Figures like David Hamilton, Jackson, Earl B. Otley and many other great Virgin Islanders overcame insignificant challenges to advance these islands we call home today. We cannot let their sacrifices go to waste through fear or apathy.
- 2:45:10 It is up to us, not just the legislature or the people in this building, Virgin Islanders. It is up to us to honor their legacy and fulfill our potential. So although we are progressing through the throes of change, greater good requires action. And sometimes that action is unpopular. Our legacy and our fortunes are one and the same, and if not curated well, we will have the risk of falling once again into disrepair. Senators, let us not exit these halls and pick up the battering ram of our political offices for the sake of acrimony and personal ambition. Let us work together to pass legislation that inspires wealth acquisition and encourages greater home ownership and business development for our people.
- 2:45:56 Virgin Islanders, leadership is a lonely station. Your Senators, the Lieutenant Governor and I can attest to such. The priorities before us may at times compete and conflict, but together we are about these Virgin Islands and its residents and our overall well-being. Rest assured, your government is working for you. And if this government is to endure, your full participation is required. You must take advantage of the opportunities, work with us to build community, shine the

delight on wrongdoing and wrongdoers. Embrace a healthy lifestyle and commit to preserving our natural environment and our territorial treasures. Let us strengthen our resolve to collectively clear away the rubble that has mired us in a mindset of disaster and crisis. Our vision for our community is a common one. Let us not waver when it comes to promoting responsible citizenship. We shall remain unrelenting, unflinching on our course to progress. The road ahead may not always be easy, but together we will overcome any challenge that stands in our way, including the throes of progress. As James Weldon so eloquently stated, sing a song full of faith that the dark past has taught us. Sing a song full of hope that the present has brought us. Facing the rising sun of our new day begun, let us march on till victory is won. God bless you. God bless the Virgin Islands. Love you.

- 2:47:52 Thank you very much, Governor. Please continue to stand as the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Chief Justice, and the presiding judge and delegate to Congress leave the chambers. Oh, my God.
- 2:48:52 Please be seated. We want to thank the governor for providing his seventh state the Territory Address, to the 36th Legislature of the Virgin Islands, and to the people of the Virgin Islands, I'd like to thank the Office of the Executive Director, the Central Staff of the Legislature, and to all those who were involved in ensuring that we would be here tonight.
- 2:49:59 Special thanks to our facilities crew for getting the room prepared. And thanks to our Public Affairs Division and to our media for ensuring that the people of the Virgin Islands were able to hear this important State of the Territory address. The legislative session of January 13th, 2025, which reconvened on January 27th, 2025, is hereby adjourned. We're asking the viewing and listening audience to remain tuned in for Senate reactions to the State of the Territory Address and to the Legislature's post-address coverage. Thank you all, ladies and gentlemen, for being here.
- 2:51:12 Thank you. and we are back hey Jamal okay that was a lot going on we have a whole lot of questions a whole lot of stuff to discuss um what what did you think what was it what was the tone like to you uh i i really feel like the tone of this was generally you know i think the tone was generally safe i think that was the general theme of this i think the governor was legitimately just trying to be you know trying to be calm trying to say okay everything is thing is all right i don't feel as if we got into detail with a whole bunch of stuff it seemed to have been generally hey this is what's going on we're trying to fix this but it did not seem as if it was all that much in detail right i think it was i was there to be a little bit more hopeful um some of the stuff that you touched on that resonates but like i said there's a lot of stuff of them that he did in Touchdown. So when we get to sit with the senators, we hear what they take as what they thought about it.
- 2:53:10 We know there's a lot of information for them to be gathered in this one five minute round. But still, just to get our opinion from them as to where it is, where they see that we stand, and what changes needs to be made, and how we're going to move forward from here. Everything is fresh now, fresh that everybody minds. So we will discuss it, and then we'll see how we go. We're here at the Legislative Hall. We are watching the governor has just left the hall. And we are looking at the dignitaries, conversating, and getting ready as well. And setting up the backdrop so we could do these interviews and have some conversation with the one-on-one with our senators for the 36th legislature. What are you thinking so far?
- 2:53:56 like i like i said previously i think what i feel is that the governor is he's a gentleman just trying to say okay this is where we are i don't think it was much of i don't think we we probably i think some of us that probably want more out of this but once again i do think he's probably trying to keep it safe we know all of the the things and the issues that this place is is having right now but i'm thinking he's probably generally keeping it safe in the speech some of the things like i said especially wapa was that was a bit a a whole target you know like i said that's affecting uh both of us um it had seems to balance out a little bit more we don't have as much outages but we still have some outages um and next thing you know you're gonna be hurricane season again and we have to go through the same process again so um like i said he was optimistic um i i looked at this speech and i looked at the one from last year to see what what some of the changes that was made um i'm still looking out for you know for education um we also have a new administration in in the states as well and they're making um drastic changes which i'm sure is going to affect us in some kind of way we've already seen the drastic changes this administration in the mainland has not not even been in office for that long and we've already seen what one week has what felt like what a month a year and one of the things that he that i've seen um reports on is the the fact about fema yes he wants to we take out fema all together and from my understanding it seems like he probably wants
- 2:55:44 to make that a sort of it would be states rights yeah that's that would be tough you know we we we still ain't recover from 2017 so i don't know how i do so i do believe that if if fema gets retooled that is going to look drastically different for the origin islands i mean we don't know what sort of funding we would potentially lose if we were to lose funding so i believe that this administration that's in right now it's going to give some radically different results from what we probably were used to in the past four years right and we don't and to be honest with you and we don't as especially as

virgin islands we hate to hear that we're sending back money to for anything and we know for sure that we need it you know for for education for um health care human services so we don't want to hear there's no money going back to the federal money listen we definitely need it we need uh we need roots in the grounds we need to get some of these ideas that we've been flirting with for instance 2017. we need to see some of these things that's how one thing that the governor also mentioned about um 10 schools by the end of 2025. i don't know if that's built or just the drafts from them so we're looking forward to that because like i said the education we can't do much without education and we know for sure we still need teachers He spoke about the teacher's salary. And my personal observation about teachers, teachers should be paid very well.

2:57:11 Yes, my mom was an elementary school teacher for 30 years. Yes, pay them, pay them, pay them, pay them, pay them. They're responsible for the next generation and the next generation of students. So we definitely got to pay them what they deserve, to be honest with you. So I'm looking forward to that. I was going to say, oh, we're going to talk to the senators and we can see what they take um we have some some freshman senators like i said earlier that um should be able to just talk about what's their experience from this probably the first time being in at the state of the territory and and what are you looking forward to in in months to come because they have to hit the ground yeah uh the new senators new freshman senators have to hit this ground running once again we are we are seeing these issues play out before our very own And once again, I would hope that the new senators would come and just hit the ground running and say, OK, we have to attack this.

2:58:10 Let's just get things going. We need to change the pace. We have to do more. Like I said, one word that we always hear, which is, I studied this word, transparency. So I don't know how transparency works when it comes to actually for government. But we use the word... Yeah, it does seem like the word transparency is a sort of buzzword right now. And once again, do we really know what the word transparency means?

2:58:42 Exactly, right, exactly. So if you happen to be thinking about it, what does that mean? Right, right, right, agreed, agreed. All right, so we're here, we're watching, we're getting ready to set up to do these interviews. We're looking at everybody's getting ready. The senators are there. They're just moving the chairs and getting our set set up. And we should be live in a few minutes. It's been a pleasure, Dr. Jamal. We can go and do these senators. And we will see how this works. All right. All righty.

2:59:29 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Transcription by CastingWords Thank you. We'll be right back.

3:02:29 Thank you. Thank you. ¶¶ ¶¶ Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

3:05:28 Thank you. Thank you.

3:06:28 Oh, my God. Thank you.

3:07:28 Thank you. Let's go.

3:08:28 concluded his State of the Territory address and now Legity is transitioning into our Senate reactions. Our Senate reactions, we highlight all of the Senator's feelings towards the governor's speech. Tonight I have Senate President Milton E. Potter. How are you tonight? I'm excellent, Africa. How are you doing today? I'm doing pretty good. In terms of the governor's speech, how would you evaluate his speech? And would you say that some of the items that was outlined in his speech aligns with the pressing issues of our community i would say i mean the governor has been doing this type of speech for the last seven years he's good at it governor gave a eloquent speech i would say but i whether or not it fully aligns with the reality of the average Virgin Islander on the street, that is another story. I don't think that all is well in the territory. And I think the governor made an emphasis on the fact that things are really progressing nicely in the territory. So I think there is some level of incongruence between what the governor articulated, much of what the governor articulated, realities of the man and woman on the street. Well I can definitely concur because when we checked our social media pages there were a lot of people who were basically speaking to the point that you just made. My second question, what are your priorities as the senate president in collaborating with the governor and his administration with the key challenges mentioned such as economic development, infrastructure and education reform?

3:10:17 I want to tell you, cost of living is a huge thing for me. It's a huge thing for every Virgin Islander. We just came off of an election and just going door-to-door interacting with the average Virgin Islander. Their concern is the inflationary pressures that are affecting them on a day-to-day basis. Talking about WAPA, the price of food, the price of housing. These are things that directly impact people and I think we need to find some realistic measures where on a local level well we can you know have some impact in remediating the LCA Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs I know we sort of look at licensing and consumer affairs as just the licensing licensing entity but I think that they have a bigger role to play when it comes to our economy food prices monitoring the prices of goods in our territory whether or not it matches up with you know the prices that consumer goods are supposed to be the impact of trailers bringing our foods

and how does that impact the price in the grocery stores so I think that having a more serious collaborative discussion with the executive branch concerning the economic inflationary pressures that are impacting our people on a day-to-day basis is something that we this 36 legislature will be prioritizing are there areas in the governor's proposals or speech where you feel additional oversight adjustments or anything needs to be implemented or talked about well i i know the the whole notion of our recovery.

3:12:05 I know the governor acknowledged that the recovery process is a slow one. But at the same time, the hurricanes were in 2017. And so you're talking about close to eight years that has gone by without any real significant major structure having been done, having been erected. And I understand the slow pace of construction the bureaucracy with FEMA and the like, but be that as it may, I think that we should be seeing some more completion of significant projects. I'm talking about hospitals and schools and major roadways. We should start seeing some improvement in that area.

3:12:53 Senator, thank you so much. Very quickly, can you rapidly answer this last question was there anything that the governor spoke about tonight or was something that you wish he spoke about tonight is what I should say. Agriculture and food security I know as we rapidly approach the fair and St. Croix I think that as a territory we need to have a major push we need to have some major discussion as to our ability to improve put a dent in this 98% of the foods that we import. It's just a high risk for us to not, you know, be able to guarantee our security should these trailers stop coming. So that is something I would have liked the Governor to speak a lot more about.

3:13:40 Thank you so much. Alwyn? Good evening, good evening. And I am happy to be sitting down here with one of my long-time friends, my long-time friends, Senator Kenneth Elgittins. How are you doing? I am good. I am good. I am good. I am good. And congratulations, the vice president of the legislature. Okay. So let's get to the disagree. You should be an experienced senator when it comes to the state of the territory. Yes, should be.

3:14:12 So what are your thoughts? What do you think? First of all, I want to say that the government's state of the territory address was both insightful I think you set me up there a little bit, right? But just in case you didn't hear me, I think that the Governor's State of the Territory address was both insightful and moving, and I appreciated the clearer timelines that the Governor has provided us. As he rightfully stated, we have resources to meet our obligations, but it must first be done prudently. And I truly applaud this approach and want to see this put into action. You know, I also agree with him, with his stance. I was happy to hear him talk about his administration not tolerating public corruption. And though he has stated that today he has signed an administrative document with regards to the code of ethics, I will still be bringing forward the measure to create a conflict of interest commission. And at the same time, I also want to applaud the gain in tourism, specifically on the island of St. Croix, but we have a number of opportunities that we need to take advantage of and one of those opportunities is to the completion of the poly joseph stadium right oh we're looking forward to that definitely um and especially on wapa as well um you suppose some

3:15:57 incident initiatives on wapa coming up yes and i i applaud uh wapa and the new leadership too in the direction that they're going uh but i still want to make sure that we clean up uh what was done before so i'm definitely looking forward to the uh inspector general investigation and completion of that investigation so that we can move forward so we're in the 36 administration i realized that you don't actually have a committee so you guess you will be actually you're a member of several several committees and you know it's only now that i'm sad that i don't have a committee when i sit back and i think of it normally i'm the first senator to hold a committee hearing and when i was looking at doing that i realized oh shoot i don't have a committee right so that's i said so you probably gonna be floating with the case we give you more time to do yes i'll definitely attend um most of the uh senate hearings definitely uh play an active role in that so the senator has the governor has two more years actually to fulfill some of the the mandates that he brought forward. Are you looking forward to these two years?

3:17:10 What are you? DEVAN KUMARANI- Definitely looking forward. You know, again, the speech was insightful and moving. But I must say that we cut in a lot of ribbons, but we ain't seen these places opening. So now that we're cutting ribbons, we actually want to see these structures or facilities open to the public. Definitely, definitely. And also, health care, the hospitals.

3:17:40 That's a number one priority as well, to see the build of our new hospitals. Right. You mentioned 10 schools before the end of 2025. So I was like, 10 schools? Yes, that's an aggressive move. But let's see, because again, we have to have the people to work. And we've seen what's happening around the nation with the roundups and whatnot, and the people that are actually doing this work, they will probably not be available here in the territory. Right. We have to look at reality, and our people must understand what's taking place.

3:18:22 And that's important, the reality. Right now, we're living in reality. So the speech is that, but we're still living in a reality, so we've seen it, and we have to live it as well. Senator, thank you for your time. I appreciate you. Anything else? Any

last resorts? I want to thank you too, but you're making me look at you and say I want to step up my game for next time. I love your attire. And I love you like a brother, man. I appreciate you, man. All right, man. Take care now. Now back to you, Africa. Thank you, Owen. Joining me is Senator Avery Lewis. How are you tonight?

3:18:56 Excellent. I'm excellent. Our freshman senator, how do you plan to hold the governor and his administration accountable for achieving the goals and timelines mentioned in the State of the Territory Address? Well, tonight the governor gave a speech, and he couldn't include everything in his speech. And while I know everything couldn't be included in his speech, to hold the administration accountable, and even this body, you know, we have committees of jurisdiction. So I'll be calling in them regularly, getting timelines, updates, balances, you know where we are we moving forward making site visits and so forth you know we have to hold them accountable in terms of there are any specific concerns or gaps in a governor's address in a governor's piece that you would have liked him to discuss or talk about tonight well there were two two things really I didn't hear I heard a lot about we have 22 billion dollars of projects to to play with not to play with but to execute throughout the years um upcoming but i really didn't hear much about opening the doors to include acts for other investors to come in so we could have new revenue streams in this in the territory also i really want you know as a former administrator i really had thinking to hear more about mental illness how we're going to approach it and um you know address it in the territory so i guess let's wait my turn and call them in and we work on it together you mentioned investments one of the major things that he mentioned tonight was in investments in infrastructure in which there are new port upgrades um downtown revitalizations and of course the airports are being upgraded as well um how do you think what do you think is the best way to secure funding and how would the legislature hold them accountable in bringing these things into fruition in a timely manner well we we have been doing a great job working along with the delegate to congress and you know all our lobbyists in the states and this and this institution here as well so we're going to continue to work work along with them and secure different funding whether it's through federal grants or local monies or whatever whatever we have to do to work together as a team collaboratively to make this thing happen you know one thing i heard the governor talk about tonight is how he planned to um or put corruption wherever it is and that's one of the major things we've seen happening in a lot over the recently there's a lot of accusations and we're going to hold people feet to the fire so we have to make our people aware that we're going to provide these funding

3:21:20 but we people have to work and work honestly right what is your perspective on the governor's approach to tackling issues such as crime housing and health care as outlined in the state of the territory address well he talked about crime he talked about moving in a more modernized way of tackling things to e-ticketing and you know but i think there's other means to do it but we have to work together and bring in different communities of jurisdiction not only with our local partners but with our federal partners how will the legislature ensure that the proposed infrastructure projects are completed efficiently and sustainably well like i said before you know we have to bring office of disaster recovery and all these reporting agencies compliance agencies and so forth ask for timelines we need timelines we heard a lot of open-ending things i've been going to a lot of ribbon cuttings and different things but we really need timelines and end dates to all of these projects is there anything that you would have like to hear him talk about tonight anything that you're passionate about yeah like i said earlier mental illness is one and you know new new revenue generation but every it's a speech and you couldn't include everything so i look forward to bringing different agencies and community stakeholders into the respective community committees and we move forward from there thank you back to you alwyn and senator in terms before you go just one more quick question for you do you believe that the governor's plans for economic diversification will create long-term system or long-term stability for the virgin islands i do think so but we also have to watch what's going on on the mainland we have a new president in place and we have to see what's

3:23:07 going on there in the world of on the mainland thank you so much senator abri lewis back to you alwyn thank you africa and now i'm sitting down with one of our real veterans one of our real veterans i'm looking at my notes and you have been a senator from 2015 yes so you have been through this road many, many, many, many times. Okay, so... Mr. Definitely this is my fifth term. The President's Fifth term. Mr. So I'm glad to be returning to the Senate, and I really want to thank the people of St. Croix for giving me the overwhelming support.

3:23:42 The President's Thank you. So let's start, what do you think about the governor's this year's State of the Territory? I felt it was a little different this year, but what are your thoughts? Mr. It was a bit different. I don't think he had the same energy that I saw displayed last year there was a lot in in the message I read the message and then I listened to the message but what struck me the most is that it doesn't correlate to the reality underground so you heard about health care you heard education you heard a number of different areas but a reality and the ground at this point in the Virgin Islands is one that is not good health care is at the lowest stage on the island of st. Croix there are so many issues at Juan Luis Hospital in reference to supplies, personnel, wait time in the emergency room, education. We just came out for shortened school days because of lack of AC units and complex and Central High and Yulalie Rivera, school days being shortened. So when you look at that and then you hear, well, we're going to be building 10 schools by the end of the year. Well, I really just

want them to be able to maintain the present schools. I want a building to take place, but we need to make sure that we're able to maintain and we're able to fix those schools that are having so many issues that we have in no school or short in school is along with with that building phase i want to make sure that we take the time to make sure that education is at the forefront and that health care that that basic improvement is going to occur because while they build this the scrutiny is going to have to go someplace so we need to make sure that we take care of that but what about it and even that i'm going to you know you when you heard about the super pmo and you heard about the syndromes rebuild they listed about eight schools so the question that we're going to ask you the committee is well how are you going to be able to deal with the students while the rebuild is taking place so that's important for us to know right right agreed

3:25:45 and um let's talk about the the students now um like i said they they're going through a lot you know and even though we look at the our mental care system our health care system uh we got more bums in the street we have a lot of things that's going on with the case so you know we wanted to hear a lot more about those stuff so what are your thoughts on that as well the speech didn't speak to the homeless population it didn't speak uh to mental illness so so those are definitely areas that need to be addressed and that need to be clearly defined uh there was some language and reference to the elderly population but again no target dates so you don't know when you're going to be able to to expand living assistance facilities you heard no discussion about when we'll be able to open a mental health facility on st croix you heard no discussion about homelessness but in fact you really didn't hear much about human services human services was absent from the conversation um health with the exception of saying that Wang Louie is going to to start for the I think they this is the fourth time I've heard that Wang Louie is going to to start you didn't hear a lot of conversation about the issues that the people are facing on an everyday basis you know the lack of health care the infrastructure you heard about the natural road being paved you heard nothing about striping you heard nothing about light so with that 20 billion dollars that the Virgin Islands will have access to we expect for the virgin islands to be transformed we don't expect it to to see patchwork or to see a virgin islands that existed 10 15 years ago because we have regressed from there right you expect to see projects you expect to see modern schools being built hospital health care facilities you expect to see a bump in housing in reference to middle income housing that's one of the ways that you're able to return individuals in the virgin islands so i want to see the work on the ground i want to to see the result of the fruits of having all of these monies

3:27:44 that we can actually see the change on St. Croix and Dama St. John. Male Speaker 1 So the governor has two more years. Like I said, you are back. So what will be first on your agenda tackling in these next two years? Because like I said, we have so much things that we could be here to discuss. We could be here all night. Male Speaker 2 Yes. Male Speaker 1 Right. So what would we immediately tell you? You're the chair of the Education and Workforce Committee again for the KSB. I know you're big for education as well, but some of the other initiatives that you're thinking about. The majority had an opportunity to meet. We have literally outlined a schedule for the month of February and early March to try to detail those areas that are mostly affecting the Virgin Islands and to bring in those individuals and be able to have fact-finding hearing, oversight hearings. We will be able to glean that information and hopefully encourage them to do what they're supposed to do in the capacity that they have been hired to do.

3:28:37 we'll be announcing the education committee meeting which we're going to be bringing in bureau of school maintenance we're going to be talking about summer maintainers capital projects hospital and health we'll be bringing in jfl finance is going to be dealing with with some of the issues surrounding the party joseph stadium so we have a detailed plan for the next month and we're going to be releasing the plan within the next week the senators have been working on the schedule working on the agenda items but as soon as we have it we're going to release it to the public so the public could know what we're going to be discussing and could also ask us questions and give us recommendations thank you senator for setting the time with me where the case be very informative and we look forward to the 2036 that is nature and the best term for governor bringer thank you thank you so much thank you back to you africa thank you alwyn joining me is our delegate to congress stacy plaskett how are you tonight i'm great how are you this evening i'm doing wonderful how are your thoughts on the governor's speech well there are quite a number of components of a speech that I found very exciting. There were initiatives such as the Career Technical College, which I thought was a great addition. This is an area of students that we really need to touch, our young people that we need to be able to provide a future for. I, of course, living on St. Croix and being a racehoring person, loving the races, the notion of going back to the table about and completing the project to build a racetrack on St. Croix was something that I was very happy to hear as well and also the discussion about the work that the Department of Health has been doing with bringing in additional support for our for those that are in need of special assistance whether it's teeth cleaning dental and the others and having that partnership with outside resources I think is really taking advantage of the fact that we're part an American territory so I appreciated that as well that's wonderful now you did mention the technical school and he did stated that it would be open in 2025 sure are you looking forward to that and

- 3:30:44 do you think that that would help to boost our economy in terms of training our young men and well you know the governor needs an enormous amount of young people and people to be able to do construction while the governor did talk about our low unemployment rate what was not mentioned is that our participation in the job market hovers around 50 percent so while we have a low number of people who are actually registering as unemployed we also have a very large portion of our population which has not even looked for work anymore they're out of the market and so those are the people that I'm hoping that we'll be able to get with this Career Technical College what do you think is the best way to usher these people into that direction well I think that of course branding and advertising and recognizing the job skills that are needed here for the new economy that we have the construction work that is going to be here rather than just getting totally the over 5,000 individuals that we need for construction from beginning to end to try and utilize those individuals who are no longer participating in the job market to recognize the amount of funding that can the amount of jobs that they can have and good paying jobs that they can have for their future I think also if we are identifying funding that can pay them while they are in this technical college is something that I'd really love to support and try and find the resources for so that we can keep them engaged so that they complete one of the things that the governor mentioned in his speech was the income tax returns and what are your thoughts on that well I think throughout the governor's speech there were quite a number of issues that are federally related and are part of work that my office has been doing although my office or myself were not mentioned in them discussions of the tax returns was one area that was garnered by utilizing i was able in legislation two years ago to be able to get our earned income and our child tax credit reimbursed which is giving the government of the virgin islands between 25 and 35 million dollars a year which I'm grateful that the legislature is designated to be used for tax returns. So that's a resource that myself and my legislation were able to give the Virgin Islands. Additionally, the Medicaid funding, that was not work of lobbyists or others, that was a straight piece of legislation that I put in that allowed us to move from the Virgin Islands government having to pay 45% to now only paying 17% of the Medicaid costs, which in the time that we have done has brought 20,000 more Virgin Islanders to be able to receive health care. But, you know, that's not enough. And our Department of Insurance, the Lieutenant's Governor's Office, has to find other means of providing health insurance and bringing health insurance online to the people of the territory.
- 3:33:38 So that's something that I'm looking forward to. Is there anything in his speech that you would have liked him to talk about? was there any oversight or do you think there's an alternative approach to anything that he mentioned in his speech tonight well you know i think that we need to have a very aggressive plan to be able the governor talked about our cost share um you know the work that i did with shirlanda young who was the head of omb who actually wrote the legislation for us to receive the rebuilding money was the person that i got the governor to meet with who then after that meeting three weeks later, President Biden signed the cost share. What was not mentioned is that that 2% expires in 10 years from President Biden having signed it. So we have to have a really aggressive plan to be able to spend that 22 billion. And I think that I'm happy to work with the governor and the legislature to come up with an aggressive plan to do that. This is something that we're going to have to have all hands on deck to be able to do so that we don't then go into the next phase where we it bumps back up to that 10%. I think that that's something that we can do. We have great members of our Virgin Islands legislature, the people here and great minds to be able to collectively come up with a plan and that's something that I want to see. Thank you so much. Thank you. Back to you, Elwin. Thank you, Africa. I'm here sitting with another veteran senator from 2015. That class of 2015 had to be the greatest class. It was a powerful class.
- 3:35:05 only two of us came in new and that class at least from the distinct district the senator vla and myself yes senator noble e francis jr what are your thoughts of the governor's 2025 state of the territory where are we at right now i'll tell you this was the seventh um state of the territory address from the by the governor and of course i've had the opportunity to listen to all seven of the state of the territory address and this one i i felt that it was pretty upbeat as traditionally he's always upbeat about these speeches but i think that he actually confronted where he he made sure he created a balance where he discussed the accomplishments and progress of the administration as well as some of the challenges that we face moving forward so I think that it was very appreciative of him being able to at least articulate you know some of those challenges that we face and clearly those challenges require all of us to really meet and have a discussion in respect to how do we move those challenges and remove the barriers from those challenges going forward.
- 3:36:06 So I see you went from one hat seat to the next hat seat. You were the president, and now you're in budget. And we have budget restraints, we have FEMA money, we have a lot of money going back. Where are we going with the financial status of the version of what the governor was talking about? Well, clearly, we heard that the governor spoke about the \$22 billion that we have available to us. And I believe that in the 35th legislature, the body really worked along with the administration to ensure that we're very supportive of, again, providing the necessary resources and legislation necessary for the government to thrive. We provided a line of credit. We supported the issue of the state of emergency for WAPA. We really supported the administration in their effort, and at least we saw that we had got some credit this time around in

respect to working along with the administration. I truly believe that we do have the financial resources, at least on the federal side, to ensure that we are carrying out these projects. The challenge that continue to confront us is obviously the implementation and execution. And we really have to, again, be able to hold the administration's hand in ensuring that these projects are executed in a timely fashion. We have a very short amount of time to be able to make a difference in these projects. We see what's happening globally in terms of the perils that they're experiencing with the wildfires and the snowstorms and the hurricanes and everything else that they're experiencing. So I believe that the federal government will be looking for every available penny to be able to spend. So we have to make sure that while we talk about us ensuring that all of the funding so far, all of the FEMA money, have been allocated and encumbered, we want to make sure that we're carrying out the projects to completion so that we don't lose that funding that's available to us. tell me about the south shore initiative well um again that's that's a a visionary piece of legislation that we move forward um you know sometime back in respect to building up the south shore enterprise zone and st croix and you know in all of this discussion that we're having right now in terms of economic development i believe that we're poised to ensure that we're able to see those economic development we have the port hamilton refinery that's slated to reopen Again, within the South Shore Enterprise Zone, we have where the President continues to champion the fact that he wants to levy tariffs because he wants to bring back a lot of those industries to the United States. And I believe that we have an opportunity of a lifetime to be able to place a lot of those industries within the South Shore Enterprise Zone. So if we're really carrying out the vision to build that South Shore Enterprise Zone, I believe that all ducks are aligned for us to be able to do that. As well as there's conversation about military movement, the opening of the Panama Canal and taking that back under the United States, we're pivotally located again for us to be able to enter.

3:39:05 Perfect, right. Perfectly located for us to be able to, within the South Shore Enterprise Zone, zone with that deep water port in that area, again, to be attractive to the Panama Canal and the areas beyond. So I believe that the South Shore Enterprise Zone is really poised and positioned to be able to see some economic diversification within that zone. And for us, you know, we don't want to continue to put all our eggs in one basket. We saw what happened during the pandemic with tourism. We saw what happened when the oil refinery closed down. You know, so diversifying our economic portfolio is critical in us moving forward. I appreciate that. So, like, even also, health care, that's coming to be a main topic, to be honest with you. We've had some real bad situations going on, and I think we're in a state of emergency when it comes to health care right about now. I personally believe that.

3:39:56 So what do we do next? What else? What are the plans? Well, clearly, I believe that we have to have a consortium plan to address this health care that we're experiencing, you know, not just with the situation of infrastructure, We also want to make sure that we're bringing in all of our comprehensive health care, quality health care, you know, not just for our government entities, but also for the private sector. We have a number of urgent cares. We have a number of different, you know, facilities that provide health care in the private sector, and I believe if we're talking about quality health care, they have to come into the fold in respect to the discussion about health care, but we have an aging community. have an aging community and every single day you know we have individuals that's flown out of this this territory for the purpose of seeking health care uh beyond we have to prioritize health care here in the territory so that we could be able to address that situation senator thank you for the time i appreciate the time i was a blessing to hear you talking thank you very much i appreciate it africa back to you thank you alwyn joining me is senator marvin blyden how are you tonight Africa, I'm fine. And yourself?

3:41:03 I'm doing pretty good. What were your thoughts on the governor's speech? My thoughts on the governor's speech? Well, of course, he talked about being progressive with his speech. I do agree with that. But at the same time, I feel pretty optimistic at the same time. Why do you feel optimistic? What about his speech brought out the optimism? So first of all, the home ownership opportunities for the residents of Loveland, Bellevue, and Calabash, boom, 315 individuals, that's pretty optimistic.

3:41:40 I do not believe those individuals, especially those in St. John, would never have an opportunity to own their own home. So I was pretty happy about that. In addition to that, he spoke to the Envision program and the progress that's being made this point and I'm very very happy for that in terms of progress and opportunity for those individuals because that's a very important program. A lot of individuals that I don't need to have stood up. I know personally I worked with her in terms of her getting her home rebuild, a total rebuild and I'm very happy for that.

3:42:17 Yeah the governor did mention that there was an increase in the enrollment for the VI SLICE program and also for the Envision program. What do you think attributed to that increase? They removed it from AHFA and put it under the other agency and that's the biggest accomplishment, disaster recovery. But I want to add, while I have this platform, in addition to that, the HAP program, the Housing Assistance Program, whereas we have many families struggling at this moment in terms of insurance, insuring a home, the government spoke about that, the government spoke about that, also in terms of

foreclosure. That program actually assists many individuals in terms of making them whole again and it's because many individuals do not know about a program so I think there needs to be more PSA when it comes to the HAP program. In terms of emergency housing, how will your committee, the Committee on Housing, hold the governor and his administrative administration accountable for bringing up more community or emergency housing? Well not only emergency housing but the need work housing especially with the rebuild of this territory with all the 22 billion dollars we're speaking of where these people gonna stay. So I'm working with the Housing Finance Authority and other developers to see how we can create workforce housing to the housing platform and to the stock in order for the rebuild to move forward aggressively because as was stated by some of my colleagues and the delegates, we only have a certain amount of time to spend those funds and we cannot afford for those funds to be returned in any way, shape or fashion. So workforce housing is important. Emergency housing also is very important we are working with non-for-profit organizations in terms of emergency housing and housing finance authority have a plan to build more emergency housing to add to the housing stock when it comes to emergency housing was there anything in the governor's speech

3:44:27

that you would have liked him to talk about anything that needed additional oversight or adjustments or an alternative approach and how he's going about handling the government business Well, I would have loved to hear him talk more about probate issues in the territory. We have a serious problem when it comes to probate and I would have loved to hear what type of plan we have moving forward to address the probate situation in the territory. Also he spoke to the situation with our seniors, I didn't hear much about human services and our seniors in terms of taking care of those individuals, but I know that I have been speaking with him in terms of purchasing Seaview Nursing Home to build a facility and upgrade a facility for our seniors. I would have loved to hear more about that when it comes to our seniors and more facilities for them also, mental health and health care for our people also. So there's a lot on his plate, there's a lot to be done at this point, but I would have loved to hear a little bit more about those topics in the speech in terms of health care he said that the health care there's a lot more health care facilities that are being developed in terms of the the cancer institute as well as um having an institute for any renal support as well for those who are suffering from kidney that oh you know who in need of kidney dialysis and diabetes and diabetes so in addition to those facilities basically you would have liked to have heard him speak about a bigger expansion in terms of our senior citizens having more facilities to assist them with issues that they face as they age?

3:46:07

Definitely because we know they are our most precious assets. They have already paved the way for us and I always put them above and beyond anyone else because they are the ones that have made it possible for all of us moving forward. But again, it was a pretty optimistic speech and I look forward to working with my colleagues and administration in terms of pushing his agenda forward and assuring that the bread and butter issues the quality of life issues are addressed in this term moving forward thank you so much senator marvin blighton back to you thank you so much for the time good evening and we're back again with the lovely senator carla joseph how are you this evening i am fantastic and i'm very thankful how are you doing my friend i am great i am great wonderful so let's start talking let's let's see how do you feel about the governor's state of the territory 2025 what's your thoughts well it had some highlights um and i just want to really commend him and his team the first i want to really talk about is the obligation of over 12 billion dollars in federal monies that is a huge accomplishment especially me who have managed federal grants for over 12 years to be able to accomplish that is a huge accomplishment I want to really give a special shout out to to the lady who I know is behind of all of of that, Ms. Adrienne Williams-Octiline and her team doing a tremendous job to really obligate all of that money so that we can get the recovery happening at a faster and quicker pace because it's been happening very slow.

3:47:57

Right. So in our early conversation, you were talking about the technical college as well. Oh my goodness, yes. Because it's not everyone who wants to go on to college, earn a bachelor's degree and the like. We have a lot of people who are really good with their hands, but they need those certification to solidify them in the employment field, as well as others who may be in those fields and those trades who are working and they could hone their skills even further. So I am very elated. i would like to at least i'm sure we're going to get to be able to drill down on it in the committee on education and workforce development and i'm a member of that committee and where they're going and how quickly they'll be able to do that what we really need to see is a lot more rapid implementation it moves too slow and we are people who are able to accomplish great things in the virgin islands we've bought beaches we've done a lot and we need to be able to build that up and it begins from the top the top you said the pace and everyone is supposed to be able to follow that pace agreed agreed so you are the chair of the committee on rules and judiciary so this is a change for you how do you plan to approach this new task well i in plan to approach it as i approach everything with a level of intentionality focus diligence effectiveness and productivity i really enjoy my work as a legislator i work with a fine body of people who were selected and elected by our people to lead us through rough times and we have been through a lot of rough time i've served on the committee on rules and judiciary since I was elected so I'm very familiar about it and you know I'm a stickler for punctuality and getting things moving I really enjoy because that's how you're able to implement things and get real

progress you know

- 3:50:12 saying that you're making progress is one thing but it's all about action and And so, you know, part of the governor's discussion about the toxic doubt and trust, we have to build on that. We have to build that up, and it begins from the top. In the 35th legislature, we appropriated \$25 million for retroactive pay. And the governor went and he used it how he wanted without any consultation with us. Trust. okay so it begins with you and it begins with me and once you have that level of trust you can build on it but you have to start from the top to the bottom and if you're saying something you've got to do it you just can't say you got to walk the talk yes yes and the people in the Virgin Islands really deserve it yes what are you what are your thoughts about let's talk about health care now yeah the hospitals i have to bring that up for every single senator because that's important to me as well um at some point we have to go to the hospital and we need to make sure that we take care of that so what are your thoughts we we need to start i just keep saying that we need to go faster the pace we have to really dig in and move things faster along than we are doing i'm not too certain if it's a manpower issue or if we don't have the right people in place especially on the island of st croix what i heard and read in the newspaper about the gentleman who went to the emergency room and then left and collapsed right there and somebody found it that is something that is unacceptable not in this 21st century and in these islands so we have to really dig in and try our very best to do better and work harder you know when you're a public servant i would just want to just close out when we are public servants we are public servants to get rich we are public servants to get a whole bunch of accolades we are public servants to do the will of the people and have that uh tenacity and fortitude to do the will of the people and see things get done because it's not about the now us today it's about the future of the virgin islands so i definitely know healthcare is a big thing and also we in the saint thomas district you see the cancer the charlotte kimmerman cancer center that is coming up really fast and i'm very very happy about that thank you senator for sitting with me it's my
- 3:52:55 Always a pleasure. Always a pleasure. Always a pleasure. It's my pleasure as well. You do a really awesome job in interviewing. Thank you so kindly. Thank you. I appreciate you. Africa, back to you. Thank you, Alwyn. Joining me is Senator Ray Fonseca. How are you tonight? Awesome. Everything is going good, Africa. What were your thoughts on the governor's speech tonight? Well, you know, I listened attentively to the governor's state of the territory address. And, you know, I congratulate him on some of the areas that they're moving forward on. However, as the chairman of the Health Hospitals and Human Services Committee, I'm very concerned. What are you concerned about? Well, you know, and I'll tell you why. You see, the waiting lines in the emergency room is too long. We had this situation in St. Croix where the gentleman was there from 12. Unfortunately, you know, at 5, we know what happened. But I've been visiting the Roy Lester Snyder Hospital. There's people there from 8.30 in the morning, much longer than the St. Croix. There's some people, lady called me, just saw that she was there nine hours. She left. They can't see the hospital. So here's what we need. I'm still urging Governor Bryan to declare a hospital state of emergency to address the many challenges. We need more emergency room physicians. We need more registered nurses. We need more patient care technicians. We need supplies. We need equipment. Just the other day, as a matter of fact, another senator from St. Croix told me, the MRI machine in Wangluwi was not working. had to, the lady had to send her son off island, by the time he got the MRI, he already had fluid build up. You know, one of my staff members, her mother went to the emergency room in Roy Lester Snyder. It's not, it's not working. In addition to that, the state of emergency would jump start the procurement process. Because, you know, nobody can tell me when they're going to start Wang Louie, when they're going to start Roy Snyder, when they're going to start My Recruiting, imagine when they're going to finish. You know, we heard tonight that there's 20 billion dollars.
- 3:55:21 Well, guess what? If we spend 1 billion dollars per year, it'll take us 20 years to spend that. If we spend 500 million dollars, it's going to take us 40 years to spend it. If we spend 250 million is going to take 80 years we're spending at a rate of 250 million the federal government is not going to let us have that money for 80 years we need to speed up the progress of the hospitals and it will also address the border situation in addition to that let me interject so how would the legislature assist the administrative executive branch in speeding up this process well here's what the governor just like how he did with wapa and as of their last report in September, they took \$12 million from the ARPA fund, they got \$9 million from the general fund, and the rest of the money came from, you know, the budget stabilization fund. They were able to pump \$32 million into WAPA with that state of emergency from April to September. That \$32 million would help the hospitals. That's why the hospital is in a state of emergency. You know, if the federal government come down here and ask Anyone in this government, when any of those hospitals in addition to the Herbert Grigg or the Queen Louise home going to start and finish, no one can tell you when they're going to start or when they're going to finish.
- 3:56:50 We're in a state of emergency. Yes, we may be in a state of emergency, but the governor did mention the expansion of health care facilities in terms of the Charlotte Kimmelman Cancer Institute and the health care foundation for the renal center. Yes. What are your thoughts on that? Okay, good. I'm glad you mentioned that, because even though we're

building the Charlotte-Kindleman Cancer Center, we don't have the budget for the surgical oncologists and the pathologists and the hematologists. We need an additional \$2 million to be able to fully staff, even though the Charlotte-Kindleman Cancer Center is going to have the CT simulator and the linear accelerator, we will have the equipment, but we'll still be short of the staff. we need about four million dollars to finish staff the Charlotte Kilman. So there you have it, a new facility will be built, no surgical oncologist is on staff. That's a five hundred thousand dollars. So we need to address these issues to be able to provide adequate health care. Was there anything that the governor did not talk about tonight that you would have liked to hear him speak about? Yeah, you know I would like to know about when the steel workers contract negotiations will be finished with all of the unions. I know we did some of them like the nurses union, et cetera, et cetera, and the nurses now has been increased and that's good. That will help us with recruiting. But there's a lot of other employees in this government are still waiting for their negotiated settlements to be completed. So I would like him to address that. Also, I would like him to address when the other balance of the tax refunds are going to be paid. So there's some items that, you know, he didn't address that I'd like to see addressed. And of course the border situation in the hospitals, I have to come back for that because, you know, borders are the elderly patients that present to the hospital because they're family or they don't have the means to provide the care. And that takes up emergency room beds and there again is the completion of the construction of

3:58:51 the Herbert Grigg home for the elderly and also the Queen Louise home for the elderly and also the human services demolition and reconstruction of the Joe Malloy Human Services complex. So in my area of health hospitals and human services I think he touched the surface but he didn't go into the sufficient detail that I would have liked to hear. Thank you Senator Ray Fonseca. Back to you Alwyn. Thank you Africa. Mr. Hubert Frederick, our Freshman Senator. How are you doing this evening?

3:59:28 Doing pretty good. You're a Freshman, so this is probably your first State of the Territory. What are your thoughts, your initial thoughts? This is my very first State of the Territory address. I've seen it on television when Governor Turnbull was in office. I did see it then because I was part of that administration, but I didn't come. come i was just at home watching it like everyone else and so it's it's it's a great feeling to be here for the first time to see it happen and unfold right and the governor was literally within a few feet of me so it was fun it was fun right so what are your thoughts on his speech then what is what do you what is the upbeat or what do you make you feel with some of the comments that he made i i was kind of trying to relate it to some of the concerns my constituents told me while i was running you know because every time i spoke to people they kept saying i want you to do good for me frederick do good for us and so i was looking to see if what he was saying translated translated into good for the people and i could tell you you know i think it fell a little short it was more uh upbeat speech to talk about his administration top accomplishments but in terms of the regular people that i deal with right they can't relate to that they can't see how any of that impact their lives right for example um 22 and a half billion dollars that's a huge number it's great we'll never see that number as a regular virgin islander you know very few people will see that and so that's why they're disconnected from that kind of stuff you know so yes to those of us who understands math and going yes that's a big number it will have a a lot of economic impact but on a macro level not to the micro person right you know my my uncle

4:01:17 my auntie my cousins won't see any major difference to their lives right okay and you're you're a business guy so we know that you know finances and whatnot so that will be one of your strengths so let's talk about agriculture he didn't talk much about coffee culture right now and i've heard a lot of conversation about sustaining for ourselves behavior too because anything happens has to come in to the virgin islands right so how how we were going to be able to approach that you're on the committee you're a chairman of the committee as well correct any thoughts you have on on that question moving forward that that's a good question um i wanted to i was hoping that he would address something like that tell me how as a farmer all this money coming in all these great numbers coming in from tourism how is that going to help me and my farm you know how is that going to help the workers that i have to pay and now that ice is doing what they're doing you know it's going to be even harder for a farmer to get some help so you know i didn't see that and so now tomorrow when i go back home i'm going to have to hear well frederick i heard the governor speak but it seemed like he forgot me and so i'm gonna have to now find a way to bridge legislation so we could capture some of that 22 and a half billion dollars some way so that farmers could get something fishermen could get something out of that see that's the thing it doesn't trickle down and if it's not going to trickle down nobody's going to care right i agree these great federal grant awards it's good good for everybody on a micro level but if it's not going into your pocket you're feeling it right then it's not gonna matter i could tell you i own more than one business and i could tell you none of this stuff in the last seven years have touched my businesses i made more money right after the storm because people were desperate and they needed to get their dry cleaning and their laundry done okay see that had nothing to do with any federal funds that's when we were struggling right so i need economic development policies and i'm going to work with my colleagues to see how we could actually touch the regular joe blow

- 4:03:18 right how can we impact their basic day-to-day lives this this was a nice speech and i think people people need to hear it right about now to be honest with you we've been going through a lot we've been there's a lot of negative that comes with with with politics to be honest with you and uh we need to pull our foot to the ground and start walking we need to get some stuff done and um definitely want to talk to you about health care i'm asking all the listeners about health care because like i said it's really important right now a lot of people are leaving have to go leave to go to the doctors with the case be in the emergency room six hour wait um what what can we do at this point what's what's your thoughts being a former deputy commissioner of health i can tell you 20 years ago i was in that role our health care system has digressed it's gone worse the things we had in place we don't have anymore the physicians that were once here the specialists that were once here they're gone what we're failing to realize just building in the hospital will not make them return. The old infrastructure of healthcare needs to be changed, improved, and we're not doing it that way. We're just addressing, demolish the old hospital building and build a new one and that's it. That's gonna make healthcare good. No, we're gonna have to take this and really start from scratch, because especially on St. Croix, we are devastated. And to get a surgeon to come here, like for example, a thoracic heart surgeon, someone who opens you up and you know take your heart apart how do you get someone who makes eight hundred thousand dollars a year to come and live on st croix right you have to have a place where his family his wife his kids could have an enjoyable life they don't want to give up their wonderful lifestyle in the states or wherever they are to come here and do what just go on the beach i can't tell the wife hey listen hun go on the beach every day that's it there's nothing else to do no so we need to develop an infrastructure that's going to make people want to come here work here and be a part of our community again i know it's hard work yeah but that's what it's going to take we're going to hit the run going in thank you senator for sitting with me appreciate you appreciate the time thanks appreciate you africa back to you thank you allen joining me is senator duane de graff how are you tonight i'm i'm wonderful thank you very much good evening
- 4:05:38 everyone what were your thoughts on the governor's speech you know i think um i would congratulate the governor and the accomplishments of his administration uh seven years in to name some of the accomplishments they've done uh though i believe some are quite frankly impossible to do but overall i think he gave a good account for his administration the issue i have i would like to see or hear more things about the senior population we are age community and not just to to the effect of where we're going straight into queen louise home or herbert greg that that said but we have seniors in 60s 70s vibrant you know we want to see things for seniors also and you know most definitely I would like to address that seven years in as a senator I live here all my life I have eight years in as a senator the governor of seven years in drive around the territory drive around St. Thomas St. John St. Croix what do you see how do you feel garbage I feel so terrible to see my community my territory the way it looks garbage sewage so it sounds to me like you would have liked him to address some of the beautification processes in the territory? Well see it's not just about beautification it's about the things that show that the local person matter in terms of tourism is up, tourism is doing great you know we we bring in revenues and stuff from tourism but again what what do me that resident of this territory have to drive around every day and see you know bush overgrown garbage you know so i i like address some of the realities of of what we see here 22.5 billion dollars it went from 8 billion to 15 billion to 22.5 billion
- 4:07:39 dollars being obligated by fema i heard the new president trump say he getting rid of fema so what does that do to us that's scary to me but again it's reality and and that's why i would like to hear a little more towards reality. One of the things the Governor stated in his speech, and I'm going to quote, Senators, let us exit these halls and pick up the political battering ram for the sake of acrimony and personal ambition. Let us work together to pass legislation that inspires wealth acquisition and encourages greater home ownership and business development for our people. What are your thoughts on that statement? You know my thoughts, I agree with him a hundred 100%. But again, I'm urging my colleagues in the first branch of government, let's be fair to the people. Let's don't just look at a party and decide, hey, I'm the same party with the governors, I'm going to do what he said.
- 4:08:29 No, we're the first branch of government. We're going to make the difference for the people. That's what I want. I want inclusion to be a part of making those decisions, not leave me out because I'm not a member of that party. and then you make your decisions, and then when I have to say, cry foul, you say, oh, the graph or whatever, the minority centers, we just choose to be. It's not about that. We are part of this community. The reality of what's taking place, to hear you say you're going to build this, and seven years before, you didn't spend these billions of dollars. Two years left now, we're talking about miraculously. we're going to spend 22 and a half billion dollars in two years that's all i'm saying let's get reality they're doing hoodwink the people and and again it's he has great accomplishments for his administration things he can be proud of and rest your hat on i support that i want to be a part of it but again i don't want to be fooling the people so it seems to me like you you you were excited that he spoke about um the different things the accomplishments and achievements so far during his tenure but you really wanted him to stress a little bit more on improving the quality of life for virgin islanders which would include the aging population as well as health care expanding health care right the

income tax eight percent what do you think about that well like i said again great accomplishment but remember we gave him 25 million dollars to pay back some of the retro you spend it how you chose and then you you make it out to be well it was Because between feeding somebody or leaving your lights on, paying you, you didn't tell us that before. We gave you the money. All these accomplishments, local accomplishments that the governor speaks about, this branch of government gave him the money. What you did with it, you did with it.

4:10:23 But I'm just saying, it's not to be negative, it's to be positive, to be a part of it. I'm elected official, like all my colleagues, and we're here to do a job for the people. keep it in that vein and be real to the people tell the people hey the truth then we go all sing hunky-dory and and happy go lucky but you know so again great speech by the governor and his great accomplishments for seven years but let's now get down to brass tacks reality for the next two years going forward you know thank you senator back to you thank you very much thank you africa i am here sitting with another freshman how are you doing senator i'm doing pretty well looking good we're looking good we're looking good we're looking good you're looking good yeah we're bouncing we're ready to roll after you bounce you gotta roll all right all right so this is your well this won't be your first city of the territory because you will also remember another cabinet yes but this is to be your first senator first city of the territory as a senator yes yes it is so what are your thoughts what are your my thoughts tonight is um the governor came out with some energy um he touched on i guess what everybody wants to hear about but we keep hearing about these large quantities of monies but i i haven't seen in the seven years that we really stand to dig in right and that's important because the infrastructure here need to be address when he speak about how the the numbers of tourists that went from one numbers and it jumped it could come back and be a negative to us as well because if a person came to the board now to visit and you see a lot of construction going on regards to how the place look you are right with it we don't have the volume of construction that should have already been going on right and so when

4:12:15 they leave they could tell our next family member well hey don't waste the time to go to the borderline because they got a lot of potholes they place dirty they place this they got water um sewage water running all over so we got to be careful in bringing in large amount of tourists to our um community at this time because why are we building right why are we building so we need to really start building because we still ain't really doing anything right you know i mean we're saying projects are going to be online we've been hearing that but that's not that we're hearing billions 22 billion this amount but we have to access these monies if it means i all for local contractors but we know we don't have enough manpower to carry it out so i want to make sure they're gonna get a little they bite that they dissolve for being here and having the skill that's important right i like the fact that you we're looking to get certified individuals so you have a choice if you didn't want to go to college right so that's that's that's a plus that's a big plus i like that a whole bunch um being that i'm gonna be heading up homeland security i what's alarming is when you look at seven deaths or murders between january to june and then you are 37 to finish out the years that ain't good at all you know i mean so i feel that um what's missing is the component to prosecute is missing right clearly right so under my tenure i plan to hopefully start to get working you know they call parties together and have a solution to get the justice department in in gear to get going so if it is finance or whatever it is that hold up or whatever the personnel they need to get the prosecution portion together because i think with prosecution in place it'll be a deterrent for somebody else to continue or cut back on our street violence like because

4:14:09 i mean like we're settling down the street because the government ain't doing nothing so this next person come back this person kill this person family member minds i went back and i did so if we are prosecuting individuals then we wouldn't have that problem i think it'll simmer but it ain't going to be simmered because nobody ain't going gaining any problems right you you was the um the director for for fire at one point so let's talk about the the fire and he didn't mention the fire and and and the merger no he he didn't he didn't mention i guess i guess maybe it's a year out of when they they got the merger going i feel that um i don't think they they took enough time to train more individual across the board when they had puffer here was the time to slow down and had your locals so that at the time when patford had to leave you'd have had more people train up right because it's not it's it's still even even those i feel that they got a different setting because it's hard to really say you're taking in an individual off the street to train them ems you know to me it's brutal to to rush it right it needs to be slow and if that's the case then we need to just have just like the same we want to open certification for youngsters coming out of school the certification need to be open to the public right that you could go there and train and become an emt right and then the fire service should be hiring individual that went through that course right because it'll be a speedier process to get it done because it's about service you know the whole everybody wants service if you go to school you drop off your child you want to know that when you drop them out by the gate if it's a little child somebody will have to hold their hand and take them across so it's the same if if you're older and they came to your um establishment or your home because you're sick you don't want to hear well i have to wait until the next two guys come in another vehicle the person who show up that's where that's the call that you made they came to your home and you want to make sure that they could service you

- 4:16:14 so that's important so i'm going to ask you a question about you covered you covered my You might have a quick question already, but it appears to be good. Well, the health part, with me, I think a rapid portion, I mean, we're living in one Virginia and I feel we have to have short term solutions to some of our problems, because just telling me about your money and you're telling me about ten years or five years to fix something, what about now? So certain of our problems need to be addressed now. The hospital, if Wang Lui ready to knock down, let's knock down Wang Lui, bill it have the individuals either like for right now we could do the short term with bringing in like partnership making a partnership right now with a outside university slash hospital to have individual come in here to treat or stay short term a short term period so we have doctors on on the ground but But as far as the construction, we need to get expeditiously and start to work on Wang Louie, staff it fully, and then instead of folks having to leave St. Thomas to go to the mainland, they could be coming to St. Croix because Wang Louie is already finished. Because right now, Snyder Hospital is more applicable than Wang Louie.
- 4:17:39 So we have to deal with what we have because I think a lot of the time we need to break down. others might feel I'll have to be done one time but just like if we're looking for contractors we know any plot we know only place that got damaged so when something happens in the States it's if it's easier to deploy to that state most contractors gonna go away easier to deploy even though you might make a might make a little more coming this way but the key point is if you could deploy and don't have to worry about shipping stuff over to ship back over when you're finished. Yeah, I'll cover that.
- 4:18:13 Senator Clifford Grover, I appreciate your time. Thank you so much. And we got some work to do. We got work to do, and that's what I do normally. Every aspect of my life that I have faced insofar is I normally get everything when it's up against the wall and come out the wall with some patience, because ain't everything that happens as quick as you want it to happen. But the key thing is, once you start, you got to stay consistent to get it done. Okay, good.
- 4:18:39 Thank you for your time. All right. Back to you, Africa. Thank you, Elwin. Joining me is Senator Elmer Francis Heiliger. How are you? Good evening. Oh, speaking to your mic. Good evening. Good evening. What did you think about the governor's speech? I think he attempted to be a little bit upbeat in really sharing his message. From the speech, I did like when he spoke about the tourism aspect and how we are placed. I hope that the increased numbers that he spoke about will translate into those tourism dollars that could potentially benefit the people of the territory.
- 4:19:15 What if the things that he mentioned in terms of tourism is expanding hotels and places for people to stay? Do you think that that would assist in boosting the tourism dollars? Well, as you know, it's over 40 plus years since a hotel has been built out here in the territory. So I think it's a definite plus for us. Any time that we have access to inventory, that could encourage people to stay overnight because cruise ships do bring a level of financing to the territory, but it's those overnight dollars that really infuse the general fund. So anything to really encourage that, I think, is a plus.
- 4:19:53 Did the governor mention something tonight that you believe needed additional oversight or maybe an alternative approach to implementing? Well, I think there were several things he touched on. And I think for me that there was some type of a disconnect in regards to him elaborating on certain things. He would say there's sewage in the streets, but we're going to fix it. What does that mean to the average person? What we have to do in really putting out the message to the public is that people just want something to hold on to. They need some type of information. So if you said, okay, we're going to fix it and we're doing plans, this is what we're doing. at least you give the public something to say well okay I know within the next two years three years this problem is going to be solved but to be in a situation where he just kept saying we're going to do this we're going to do that we're going to do this and and I'm sitting here like okay so what does that mean and I think that's where some of the problem lied for me you were looking for more of a detailed plan timelines I don't expect him to come here in hour and a half and tell us every little detail but I think you have to give the public something you know you know I often equate it sometimes to I had one of my relatives they've had to repeat a grade in third grade and they would come and say auntie auntie I got an A in class my own mentality was you should be the smartest kid in the class I shouldn't reward you for doing your job and doing the best it because you're doing it again and for seven years of being into this job I think for me I expect a lot more I expect a little bit better but unfortunately you know we've been plagued with a lot of issues of corruption we're plagued with so many things that are distractions that I think that we really need to get back to focusing on helping the people of this territory and making it a better place for them in terms of education you didn't mention education
- 4:22:02 he did state that we will have a vocational school a vocational college here in 2025 what are your thoughts i think that's a plus anytime you have an opportunity that our people could educate and advance themselves because everybody's not college bound everybody um some people are going to go into the workforce right after high school some people have not even finished high school when this is an opportunity for them to go down another pathway to be educated to really help themselves you know if we could do whatever we can do to help our people progress by giving them opportunities I'm a hundred percent in support of that and that was one of the good things I'm looking forward to like also when he

mentioned the UVI scholarships there were he said thousands of scholarships to students well what he's talking about has to do where the legislature had passed x amount of millions of dollars to really open up the doorways that if you were born here you went to school here that you could get free tuition and it was also extended not only to just full-time students but now part-time students can participate as well so that's also a good thing was there anything in his speech tonight you would have liked him to talk about that he did not well you know i could sit here all day and tell you but there was one One thing he spoke about I didn't really like when he went down the pathway of trying to tell the legislature to take the \$20 million that we earmarked for the gym and pay retro. I don't know if this governor has a short-term memory, but this legislature made it our business not once but twice to put into the budget monies for retro. He and his budget directors made the decision to spend the money elsewhere. So if we have a settlement, and one of the things he didn't share with the public is within that settlement, a lot of these things were already earmarked and negotiated. So the legislature had to translate that negotiation into law to guarantee these monies were spent. We had to spend X amount for senior citizen facilities. We had to spend X amount for mental health facilities. We have to spend X amount for social facilities. So if we decided that we're going to build a gym, that's where the money should go. Maybe he needs to go find where he spend the retro money and go and put it back.

4:24:27

Thank you, Senator Almond Francis. Back to you, Alwyn. Thank you. Thank you, Africa. I'm sitting with the man from West, Senator from West. Senator Franklin D. Johnson, welcome. How are you doing? good evening i'm doing fine it's a pleasure being here tonight with you and um i said i leave the last for best oh yeah yeah yeah well i'm bringing it home we need to be brought to it we don't get straight to it we don't waste no time because i honestly believe the governor was talking about a different virginia and not the same one that i'm seeing because when you're going to start talk about building up our tongues and i could go right down there by windward and just say nothing but sewage i could go down by hulga dance and say nothing but sewage these things have a great concern to me you want to brag about horse racing in four races seven horses die wow any track in the mainland that track will be closed any track in the mainland so let's not talk about horse racing when vigl had the supporters and the spenders this governor said saint crowing ain't gonna have no horse racing before saint thomas people need to remember these things we talk about going after vigl why not go after the company that's supposed to be fixing pali Joseph Stadium, they have, oh, what, \$30 million? These things are real for me. And if the Pali Joseph could come and play and really get in action, Tonga Frederick said the island of St. Croix will start to boost. You talk about schools? There's only one school in St. Croix to talk about Central High. We lost four schools. Four schools was closed down on the island of St. Croix. And you can only be billing one? You want to talk about the hospital? You really want to talk about that? But just last week, a mother called me and I heard Fonseca speaking about it. Her child was hospitalized.

4:26:09

He was diagnosed with dengue fever. The boys were diagnosed, they're waiting to do an MRI and they're playing games with this lady saying, we need transportation to send him over to the clinic to the MRI place to do it. Trying to find out they didn't have a contract with the agents, the company, the private company that can do the MRI. This lady, because she had to worry about, had to get her son off of this island. When he got up to the mainland, he ended up having pneumonia. If this lady didn't have that resources to get her child out of here, he'd be our next victim in the hospital. These things are serious. And when the governor come here with these fluff and everybody sit around and play games with it, it's not game for me and my people. It's real time. We're talking about these bundles. If these bundles come and the money goes out of this territory, what good is it to us? The small companies, them, can't get their fair share. It doesn't make no sense to us. The money is going to come, and it's going to leave the territory as fast as it come. And any time that happens, all of those millions that we claim we get, what good is it to any of us?

4:27:15

I was going to ask you, the federal government right now looking to take away FEMA. So what will we do? Let me tell you something. We need to pay very close attention. The Republicans are in power, not the Democrats. And Donald Trump and his team ain't playing. You see the videos. They got ice all over this territory already. Rolling in. And you know, if someone is in the territory illegally, I understand this thing. But just going knocking on people's door and moving them, these are the people that are doing the hard work. When you talk about this stuff that Donald Trump talking about, this thing is real, you know? Yeah, yes it is. And when you start getting rid of the people who are picking the basic fruits that you have to buy, the cost in the store is going to go high, skyrocketing. So we need to be mindful. If we don't spend this money fast enough, we're going to lose this money. And we're going to sit here with our roads, with our schools, with our hospital, sitting just how they've been.

4:28:11

It's been seven years since the hurricane. And we're talking about all of these billions of dollars? I agree. Show me what's happening. Don't keep promising me. He spoke about the tender pair, and Frederick said, you will believe that this pair is already completed. It's not. So you haven't bring no life to the tongue of Frederickstead. You talk about fixing these roads. Over and over, he speak about these roads. They ain't fixed yet. In 2023, in the state of the territory, he spoke about a hotel on the island of St. Croix, Patterson Cay, which was supposed to be 120 room. No mention of that. And ask if it

started. Ask the question. I'm glad to see that this investor came and did this hotel here on the island of St. Thomas. But if we're talking about trying to get involved and sports tourism and bringing people to the big island, we need hotel, too.

4:29:00 I agree. I agree with you 100%. I like who's not like you, so don't bite me either. Oh, no, no, no. We're good. We're in the same fight. We're good. But at the end of the day, what we have to all understand, if St. Croix fails, the Virgin Islands fail. Because all the money goes into one pot. It's not that St. Croix is going to get the money at St. Thomas is going to get. The money goes into one pot. And if one of your children living in your house continue breaking up everything, mashing up everything, you think the rest is going to benefit? It can't. I agree. So we have some serious issues. I am very serious about this. And I'm asking my colleagues them. Because I consider the 35th legislature to be a laid back legislature, folks wasn't bringing in these agencies to ask the serious questions, find out where we are.

4:29:50 You know, up to this week, I saw a picture of a lady's home. She's about 80-something years old. And the roof that they took off our house been off for the last four years. Four years. And the lady's crying out for help. So he said that the Envision program finally got legs. I hope they got four to six legs. Because they really need to move fast and getting our seniors out of the condition that they're living in. Because most of the homeowners that are going through this problem are the elderly. It's not young people that just build a house buy a house it's all folks that living with homes without roof with blue tops up to today we really saved the best for last i i am serious about this you know when i got into this i i didn't come to it thinking about money i thinking about service to our people and that's have been my desire to see life better for the people in this territory to do things that are going to change the trajectory of how this territory is going but when i sit here whole night and have to listen to fluff promises promises and then you're gonna come after the legislature and say um bring a bill for this retro money we gave it to you two times governor why would i give you a next dime for you to do what you want to do really and it's at the end of the day the people are suffering the people feel it but don't come in here playing this puppy show game with me i'm not about that at all i take this very serious when i ask the people to be their voice i am serious about that when i ask the people to give me a vote to represent them i'm very serious and very passionate about it and i'm not gonna sit down lay back this is gonna be a rough year for all of us because i definitely come in with fire every day senator from west appreciate your time senator franklin d johnson thank you very much have a wonderful night god bless these

4:31:37 virgin islands thank you you're welcome Well, that was a very lively discussion tonight, very lively interview. Yes, it was. Interviews. Yes, yes, yes. What a day we've had. Sound good? The senators seem to have the act together. I think we are off running. I think we got to go to some of this as where the government and the Virgin Islands is at and we're looking forward to the 36th legislature.

4:32:09 I think one of the reoccurring themes tonight was the term aggression. Yes, yes. Being aggressive and using aggressive legislation and moving and doing things aggressively. So I think that the 36th legislature wants to see things happening aggressively. Yeah, we need to, we need to, we need to. That was a reoccurring theme tonight. What are your thoughts, Amal? I think we're moving at kind of a slow pace. We need to bump things up. I think we need to get moving. What are your thoughts? Yes, yes, yes. I agree wholeheartedly. We have to get everything off the ground. so gotta move and there were quite a bit of people who said that they that some of the speech wasn't real like it wasn't based in reality right right we live in it so we've got a wonderful day wonderful night now we did good thank you so much for tuning into legit TV state of the territory address by governor Albert Bryan thank you so much for sticking along with us to see the Senate reactions as well. I'm Africa Harrigan. I'm Alwyn Baptiste. I'm Jamal Potter. Thank you and have a great night. Wonderful night. Thank you.

4:33:36 Thank you. Thank you.

People named in this transcript

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

- 8x **Senator Novelle Francis**
heard in this transcript as: Almond Francis, Francis, Francis Jr, Novell E. Francis Jr, Novell Francis Jr
- 6x **Senator Ray Fonseca**
heard in this transcript as: Fonseca
- 5x **Governor Albert Bryan Jr**

- heard in this transcript as: Albert Bryan, Bryan
- 4x **Senator Alma Francis-Heyliger**
heard in this transcript as: Alma Francis-Heiliger, Elmer Francis Heiliger, Francis Hyliger
- 4x **Senator Franklin D. Johnson**
heard in this transcript as: Johnson
- 4x **Senator Kurt Violet**
heard in this transcript as: Kurt E. Valey, Valey, Viallee
- 3x **Senator Angel L. Bulkes Jr**
heard in this transcript as: Angel L. Bulkes Jr., Bulkes Jr.
- 3x **Senator Avery Lewis**
heard in this transcript as: Lewis
- 3x **Senator Hubert Frederick**
heard in this transcript as: Frederick, Hubert L. Frederick
- 3x **Senator Kenneth L. Gittens**
heard in this transcript as: Gittins, Kenneth L. Gittins
- 3x **Senator Marise C. James**
the surname alone also matches: Javan James; Giovanni James Sr
heard in this transcript as: James, Maurice C. James
- 3x **Senator Marvin Blyden**
heard in this transcript as: Blyden, Marvin A. Blyden
- 3x **Senator Milton E. Potter**
heard in this transcript as: Potter
- 2x **Senator Dwayne DeGraff**
heard in this transcript as: Dwayne M. DeGraff
- 2x **Governor Juan F. Louis Hospital**
- 2x **Senator Kurt Veilley**
heard in this transcript as: Kurt Veillet
- 2x **Senator Marvin A. Blighton**
heard in this transcript as: Blighton
- 2x **Justice Reese Hodge**
heard in this transcript as: Reese S. Hodge
- 2x **Judge Robert Molloy**
- 2x **Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach**
heard in this transcript as: Tregenza A. Roach

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.

- Act 8941

Act 8941 · An Act honoring and commending Daryl A. George Sr., colloquially known as ·Mousy·, posthumously, for his contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands as a firefighter, first responder, mentor and as Director of the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services; renaming the Tango Company Fire Station the ·Daryl A. ·Mousy· George, Sr., Fire Station· in his honor; and appropriating \$10,000 from the Business and Commercial Properties Revolving Fund to the Department of Public Works to erect the proper signage ---0
- Act 8939

Act 8939 · An Act honoring and commending police officers for the service they provide to the community and to recognize fallen law enforcement officers posthumously ---0