



| Committee on Rules & Judiciary

Legislature USVI

March 14, 2024 · 4.3 hours · gov

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- 0:33:49 We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 14, 2024, for the Committee on Rules and Judiciary has been called to order. Good morning, committee members and non-committee members. Blessed good morning to the people of the Virgin Islands, invited testifiers, the listening and viewing audience, legislative staff who's running the meeting today. I'd like to say happy Women's History Month and likewise
- 0:40:35 Virgin Islands History Month to the listening and viewing audience. At this time I would like to just announce the funeral service for my aunt Phyllis Walcott who's scheduled to be buried on March 18th. Her service is at 10 o'clock a.m. at the St. John Episcopal Church. My deepest sympathies go out to my cousin Tutti and the entire Walcott family. Lastly I join the 103.5 FM the Reef Broadcasting family as they mourn the loss of Hugh Mr. P Pemberton. The loss of Mr. P is he a huge hit for the St. Croix community. Mr. P made his impact here in the Virgin Islands for his continued support of this

territories youth his advice and his wisdom in the political realm and his contributions to economic growth we thank him mr. clerk can you please proceed with the roll call. Senator Angel L. Bolquez, Jr. Senator Bolquez, present. Senator Dianne T. K. Part. Present. Senator K. Part, present. Senator Kenneth L. Gittins. Senator Gittins, absent. Senator Maryse C. James. Senator James, present. Senator Franklin D. Johnson. Senator Johnson, present. Senator Carla J. Joseph. Senator Joseph, present. Senator Milton E. Potter. Senator Potter, present. Madam Chair, we have six present, one absent. Thank you, Mr. Clerk. I'd like to state today's meeting has three blocks two nominees and seven bills um are there any letters

0:42:57 or any correspondence to be read into the record yes madam chair please proceed in a letter dated march 14 2024 honorable dan k part chairman committee of rules and judiciary 35th legislature of the Virgin Islands, 3022 Golden Rock, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. Dear Senator Capehart, I hope this correspondence reaches you in the best of health and spirits. Please be advised that I will be slightly delayed to today's Committee on Rules and Judiciary Hearing. I note the importance of the agenda items, and I look forward to weighing in on the discussion upon my arrival. I thank you in advance for your understanding.

0:43:33 Sincerely, Senator Kenneth L. Gittins. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Clerk, can you please proceed and read the agenda into the record. Block 1, the Governor's nomination of Dr. Nathaniel Olive, Non-Agricultural Interest Nominee, Virgin Islands Conservation District, District of St. Croix. The Governor's nomination of Carlos Robles, Land Occupier Nominee, Virgin Islands Conservation District, District of St. Thomas.

0:44:03 Bill No. 35-0077, an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the Virgin Islands, acting through its commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement and St. Thomas Rescue, Inc. Parcel No. 146, revised submarine base No. 6, Southwest Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, consisting of one-story building on approximately 0.1899 U.S. acres of improved land, more or less, Zone P, for the purpose of operating a long-term headquarters for all rescue-related activities of the LISI and for other related purposes, sponsored by Senator Novell E. Francis, Jr. Bill No. 35-0211, an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the Virgin Islands, acting to its commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement and James O. Gaston for Plot No. 9G, Vicorp Lands, Prince Quarter, St. Croix, Virgin Islands, consisting of approximately 653,400 U.S. square feet or 15 U.S. acres of unimproved land, more or less, as shown on drawing No. A9-5C008, to be used for crop production and rearing small livestock, sponsored by Senator Novelli Francis, by request of the Governor. Bill number 35, that's 0225, an act approving the multi-year lease agreement between the government of the Virgin Islands, acting through its commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement and Virgin Islands Center for Agriculture, Crafts and Building Heritage of St. Croix, Inc., doing business as Virgin Islands Architecture Center for Built Heritage and Crafts for plot number 8, Church Street, and plots numbers 21, 22, and 23, Hospital Street, Christianstead Town. Company Quarter, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, consisting of two two-story masonry buildings to be used for the common good, welfare, and education of the people of the Virgin Islands on heritage and cultural legacy and for other related purposes, sponsored by Senator Novelli Francis, Jr. by request of the Governor.

0:46:09 Block 3, Bill 35-0133, an act amending Title 17, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 15, relating to scholarships by adding Section 19 GG to establish an educational scholarship program to support individuals interested in pursuing a career in the maritime industry in the Virgin Islands. sponsored by Senator Angel L. Bocas Jr., Samuel Carriong, Donna A. Fred Gregory, and Dwayne M. DeGraff, co-sponsored by Senator Ray Fonseca.

0:46:43 Bill number 35, that's 0172, an act amending Title 29, Chapter 5, Virgin Islands Code relating to building codes to provide for adoption of nationally recognized consensus-based codes and standards and amendments to such codes that are in the best interest of the territory and to provide for clarifications to the Virgin Islands Building Code, sponsored by Senator Donna A. Fred Gregory. Bill number 35-0182, an act amending Title 14 of the Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 51, by designating the existing provisions as Subchapter 1 and adding a Subchapter 2 relating to the non-consensual dissemination of sexually explicit images, sponsored by Senator Donna A. Fred Gregory.

0:47:29 Bill number 35-0218, an act amending Title 24, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 12, relating to unemployment benefits by reducing the number of weeks that unemployment benefits can be received, increasing the statute of limitations for the collection of overpayments of unemployment benefits from claimants and for delinquent employer contribution, allowing for the implementation of the payroll variation methodology, launch in the calendar year beginning January 2024, a 10-year record retention period for employers and requiring employers to register with the Virgin Islands State Information Data Exchange System sponsored by Senator Novell E. Francis Jr. Madam Chair this concludes the reading of today's agenda. Thank You Mr. Clerk. At this time I'd like to identify and acknowledge non-committee member Senator Novell E. Francis. Welcome.

0:48:26 morning I can see that we have our testifiers on st. Thomas and st. Croix already seated in the well so at this time I will ask I'll do a little housekeeping and ask individuals to please turn your cell phones off testifiers when you are speaking speak into the mic identify your name and your title that you are here for as a nominee nominee at this time I would also like to recognize the young ladies that are here among us from the program pal the police athletic lead so ladies we don't clap in the legislature so I would like to say hi and welcome these are the young ladies that I started to mentor through the PAL program and I thought it would be good for them to understand what legislators do and I'm I come to them and I talk to them and I'm giving them advice and we talk about all kinds of things so I wanted to acknowledge them and you get to see what happens in the legislature this is the rules and judiciary meeting this is where all the nominations from the from government house will come and it's just like a big job interview so we have two individuals today that we kind of interviewing them first and then we go into clearing the bills in this committee to go to another committee okay so i would proceed with um mr carlos carlos robles on saint thomas mr robles thank you for being so patient um this morning and i would like to say um mr robles is the governor's nomination for land occupier for the virgin islands conservation district on saint thomas if you could please just state your name and then we'll come to saint croix Carlos Robles Mr. Nate, Dr. Nate Olive Nathaniel Olive Thank you. Was there a question? Okay. So what we do is I will have Mr. Robles, you can begin with reading your testimony into the record at this moment.

0:51:45 Thank you. Jesus Christ be praised. Greetings to you the Honourable Diane T. Capehart, Chair, and the other members of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary, Other senators present and to the listening. Pardon me. I forgot to swear you in. So if I may, I will take a quick two-minute recess. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Let's go. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back.

0:57:58 on rules and judiciary is out of recess um i forgot to do the housekeeping rules so at this time uh dr olive and mr robles if you can please stand and raise your right hand and repeat after me do you solemnly affirm under penalty of perjury that the testimony you will give to this committee will be the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth to the best of your knowledge and belief so at this time i do okay um at this time you may be seated and this is where we would hear the testifiers give their testimony so I can follow the order of my agenda mr. Robles I would have mr. dr. olive begin with his test of testimony okay so you may proceed dr. olive thank you good morning senator Capehart members of the committee of rules and judiciary and and people of the United States Virgin Islands. It is with great honor that I accept the nomination by Governor Albert Bryan to become a member of the Board of Supervisors on the U.S. Virgin Islands Conservation District.

0:59:31 I'm here before you today to get your vote of approval. I wish to join this esteemed group of conservation experts and officials. As you see with my provided resume and following testimony, I am uniquely qualified for this position. I've demonstrated over the past 20 years my professional devotion to the conservation of natural and cultural resources in my home, the United States Virgin Islands. Many people know me as a farmer, however, like most of my fellow farmers, I'm more than that. I approach farming as a productive tool for regenerative conservation.

1:00:08 Over the past three decades, I've cultivated an expertise in natural resource ecological planning and management, research and education, and have accomplished many relevant projects here in the Virgin Islands. Now I'd like to share some of my relevant professional highlights and some examples about what I hope to accomplish as a member of the VICD. In the past decade, I've been writing plans for the Department of Agriculture for the Virgin Island Forest Legacy Areas, including Estate North Star and Inner Brass Island Management Plans.

1:00:45 My background of research and my professional career has included leading conservation projects such as recreational trail studies, natural resource impact assessment and monitoring, and regenerative organic agriculture practices. My farm, Ridge to Reef, is on two sites in St. Croix in the northwest quarter, encompassing approximately 150 acres and it's the only certified organic farm in the Virgin Islands. The name Ridge to Reef is all about the interconnections of soil and water. What we do on the land inevitably impacts the water as it flows downward to the sea and it connects our tiny island to the entire world. Working along with partner farms and non-government organizations like the virgin island farmers alliance and vi good food i have helped with others farming become more profitable by helping restart the territories farm to school program in 2014. it's growing every year in volume while also encouraging farmers to implement sustainable production practices i believe as i've seen in my own eyes that not only can we return to a more healthy and inspiring natural environment but we can do so while making money paying for it and feeding our children the best foods possible. We're doing it. As elected president of the Virgin Island Farmers Alliance, I've co-written grants that have secured over \$300,000 in the past four years to support farmers in successful production and marketing while using environmentally beneficial methods.

- 1:02:20 One such initiative is the Transition to Organic Partnership Program, and another are producer grants from the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program known as SARE, both supported by the USDA. I've helped forge relationships to implement the World Central Kitchen's Plow to Plate Program that provided hundreds of thousands of dollars directly to farmers and farm organizations after Hurricane Maria and Irma to improve our food system resiliency. I work with the Trees That Feed Foundation to obtain and distribute over 3,000 breadfruit trees across the Virgin Islands. Academically, my doctoral dissertation was centered on the assessment of the feasibility of St. Croix becoming a national heritage area, which was eventually designated this past January by President Biden, or last year.
- 1:03:16 I look forward to joining the Virgin Island Conservation District in order to further protect and benefit our precious natural and cultural resources through productive conservation initiatives and policy recommendations to relevant agencies. Indeed, this should be done in a manner that supports landowners and tenants in implementing positive environmental stewardship practices. These can help fill our aquifers with clean water, slowing it down with ponds to protect our soils and coral reefs from excessive erosion and pollution, and at the same time make it economically beneficial for the territory. First, I plan on making specific recommendations that will update VI Legal Code Title VII Agriculture Chapter III, Soil Conservation, since the VICD has been inactive for a number of years. For example, the practice of on-contour subsoiling in appropriate areas was implemented under the U.S. Agricultural Conservation Program to shatter hard pans created by tillage and development and improve water infiltration into the groundwater table to reduce runoff and flooding. This practice of cost sharing with the farmer was encouraged by up to \$5,000 of cost share per year. However, this amount was established nearly 60 years ago in 1964.
- 1:04:44 with inflation over time, that is now valued at over \$48,000, which is the kind of money that's required to do that kind of work to support those activities and that may return farms to units of environmental regeneration. This and many other updates are necessary. Second, I wish to help network the VICD with conservation districts around the country, fellow territories and insular areas with similar circumstances to help foster good ideas for the Virgin Islands. Additionally, there are pools of existing funding nationally reserved for conservation districts that can be tapped to support conservation actions right here in the Virgin Islands.
- 1:05:32 One such example is the set of technical assistance grants available from the National Association of conservation districts, which last year offered \$15 million and updated their reach to serve new and underserved producers in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and RCS. There's a lot of things out there like that. Finally, I look forward to intertwining conservation efforts with recently approved positive initiatives in the Virgin Islands that promote natural and cultural heritage conservation and agriculture together. One is the St. Corey National Heritage Area, designated by the U.S. Congress, and another is the Virgin Island Agricultural Plan, which is recently passed and funded. As a nominee, I have extensive experience with both since helping the National Park Service design and conduct that award-winning community-based feasibility study for the National Heritage Area designation, and while serving as a task force member in drafting the Virgin Island Agricultural plan, and now I'm on the food committee for that plan, seeing it through as an honorary member. I see clear ways in how we can successfully leverage federal and local resources to help these and other related industries that work together that can lead to a more healthy and ecologically productive environment while at the same time preserving the unique cultural heritage of the Virgin Islands. I desire to work with other nominees to establish a strong Conservation District Board with a positive agenda for the Virgin Islands. Thank you for your consideration for the position and I'm here at your disposal for any further information that you require. Thank you Dr. Olive. Now we'll go to St. Thomas and Mr. Carlos Carlos Robles. You may proceed with your
- 1:07:25 testimony greetings to you the honorable Diane Tk part chair and the other members of the committee on rules and judiciary other senators present and to the listening and viewing audience my name is Carlos Robles and I appear before this committee on your invitation as a nominee to the Virgin Islands conservation district board herein after referred to as the district board representing the district of St. Thomas I would like to thank the honorable Albert Bryan for affording me this opportunity and privilege to continue to serve the people of the Virgin Islands in this capacity my earliest knowledge of the function of the district board came from the conversations with Mr. Hans Lovett of Annalee Farms early in my term as commissioner of agriculture for the Virgin Islands for the VI department of agriculture via his description of the impact of the district board and the management of our precious natural resources made me realize that this board must be resurrected nationally conservation districts provide the following one non-regulatory services tailored to meet the needs of local people local properties natural resources two site specific plans for properties designed to help landowners and managers achieve land use goals and land use and conservation goals three grant funding and free or low-cost services to assist landowners and managers to take action that makes our land air water and natural habitats
- 1:09:12 healthier for all and for technical expertise for project planning and construction all conservation district boards come under the umbrella of the national association of conservation districts here in after referred to as NACD as an

example of the scope and magnitude of the district board the earth change permitting process that is currently administered by the department of planning and natural resources was developed and managed by the district board back in 1972 that responsibility was eventually assumed by the coastal zone management commission in the mid-1980s many of the water storage dams strategically positioned around the virgin islands were planned and approved by the district board and constructed in partnership with the usda soil conservation service led at the time by mr ted johnson it is unknown when the district board officially disbanded but for at least the last three 35 to 40 years there has been no activity in its absence there was at least one local entity the virgin islands resource conservation and development council or vircnd that developed and executed conservation projects and programs that benefited the agriculture community specifically and the wider virgin islands community on a whole the vi rcnd council no longer is active however the usda natural resources conservation service nracs continues to provide funding financial support and technical assistance to the people of the virgin islands for a more efficient and effective

1:11:09 natural resource management ideally the planning selection development and execution of any project should be done in consultation with and at the direction of the local conservation district board this is not how the process is operating currently the good news is that we are now on the road to resurrecting this valuable resource the nacd has re-established a presence in the virgin islands during my tenure as commissioner of agriculture in the aftermath of hurricanes irma and maria we spent countless days in dialogue with local and national usda representatives attempting to find assistance for the decimated agriculture community it was during those trying times that i connected with leadership of the nacd with the assistance of mr carlos suarez the liaison of the secretary of agriculture after many telephone conversations nacd funded two district conservationists positioned in the virgin islands department of agriculture the primary goal of the district conservationists was then and continues today to work with the virda to resurrect the district board however any and all other opportunities of financial assistance were stymied by the lack of a local district board through whom the nracs and nacd could liaison along with district board past district board chair lawitz chairman lawitz i'm familiar with

1:13:00 and had brief conversations with two current members of the district board dale brown and diane brooks and as an aside in august of 2023 i was inducted into the nacd southeast regional conservation hall of fame for my 30 plus years of work in the agriculture community in the virgin islands if selected the knowledge and experience acquired over the course of those 30 plus years will be available to the district board the local and national usda partners on behalf of the agriculture community specifically and the people of the virgin islands as a whole if i were not if i were to make one recommendation to this body irrespective of my selection or not that recommendation would be to appropriate for appropriate funding for inter-island and national travel and part-time secretarial services according to the past chairman they were allotted five thousand dollars for the functioning of the district back in the 1980s and 90s given the increased cost of traveling locally and nationally a sum of forty to forty five thousand dollars should be adequate i am truly thankful for the work that of the staff of the virda in moving this process along to this point thank you for the invitation to appear before this committee and i look forward to responding to any of your questions at this time thank you mr carlos robles thank you i want to say thank you both for your willingness to serve because um this is these are volunteer positions correct right good

1:14:52 at this time i would like to have some clarification be read into the record um when nominees are sent to the legislature to go through this process um there's a letter that's submitted to us i wanted um because there's different positions on this this board and there's a land occupier there is a non-agricultural interest so i wanted both letters to be read into the record so we can make sure it's clear that these positions that you are nominated for are read into the record. Mr. Clerk, you may proceed. In a letter dated February 29, 2024, to the Honorable Novel E. Francis, Jr., Senate President of the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands, Capitol Building, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, regarding the governor's nomination of Nathaniel Olive PhD Virgin Islands Conservation District. Dear Mr. President, in accordance with provisions of Title 7, Chapter 3, Section 45 of the Virgin Islands Code, I hereby nominate Dr. Nathaniel Olive to the Virgin Islands Conservation District for the position as a land occupier for the District of St. Croix. The term of this appointment is three years. Accordingly, it is my pleasure to ask the advice and consent of 35th Legislature on this nomination. A copy of Dr. Olive's resume is enclosed for your review. Your prompt and favorable confirmation will enhance the Board's ability to meet its robust agenda and serve the people of the Virgin Islands. Sincerely, Albert Bryan Jr., Governor. In a letter dated November 6, 2023, to the Honorable Novel E. Francis,

1:16:42 Jr., Senate President, 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands, Capitol Building, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, regarding the Governor's nomination of Carlos Robles, Virgin Islands Conservation District. Dear Mr. President, in accordance with provisions of Title 7, Chapter 3, Section 45 of the Virgin Islands Code, I hereby nominate Mr. Carlos Robles to the Virgin Islands Conservation District for the position as Land Occupier for the District of St. Thomas. The term of the appointment is three years. Accordingly, it is my pleasure to ask the advice and consent of the 35th Legislature on this nomination. A copy of Mr. Robles' resume is in close for your review your prompt and favorable confirmation will

enhance the board's ability to meet its robust agenda and serve the people of the Virgin Islands sincerely Albert Bryan jr. governor thank you thank you so they're different years there's one year two years three years to serve on this and different positions so I wanted to make sure that that was read into the record for clarification thank you mr clerk um i just want to just have a few comments before we start our line of questioning the nominees that are before us today they are no strangers to steward of this environment i've had the pleasure of actually working with both of them from mr robes and the virgin island's resource conservation development council at c reference vi r c and d these were organizations that help our territory with best management practices you know all kinds of different things to help to protect this environment so i'm happy to see that the virgin islands conservation district council is being why should what should i say revitalized because it's well needed so at this time colleagues um i would give a six minute round for you to ask your line of questioning for both of the individuals that are be here before us today we would first start with senator Carla Joseph senator

1:19:16 bolquez senator maurice james senator potter the vice chair of this committee senator franklin d johnson and six uh senator novel e francis so colleagues um six minutes um you may proceed senator carla joseph thank you so much madam chair a pleasant good day to my colleagues the viewing and listening audience and definitely to our young people who are here gathered from the police athletic league and we are so joyous to have you here with us today i wanted to first begin my line of questioning from the st croix district nominee to this board now we have voted favorably for two other nominees to this board since i've been a member of the committee on rules and judiciary i want to get from you dr olive what is your perspective on how this board should function have you done a review of the purpose behind this board yes yes and kindly indicate to us what is your understanding well there's conservation districts all across the country and they're set up based on the local you know each each locality can arrange how it functions some are water and soil conservation districts some are just soil conservation districts and how they're carried out and such and here i've tried to get as much information as I can with historical with history and also with conservation conversations with Hans Lovets who is a member and by the way he wrote me a letter of recommendation I don't know if these

1:21:17 were delivered to y'all, but there was a letter from him and from the Good Food Coalition. But, you know, so I tried to find out, like Mr. Robles was mentioning earlier, about what has been going on, and he's educated me about the important practices, like the earth change, you know, and overseeing those things. There, you know, now, I mean, a lot of the rules were written in the the mid 1960s there is a lot of refreshing and updating you know like their travel expenses that he that mr. Robles just mentioned that's so true everything is outdated and however a lot of the practices that were done like the subsoiling for example were things that are very relevant today as we have more droughts that we're dealing with as we have you know a lot of these issues with water table you know so when we can come together balancing our advocacy with the scientific knowledge that the members bring to it that we can make decisions on implementing those programs okay thank you and just quickly give me one of your top priorities as a potential board member what do you plan to do as the first thing should you be successfully nominated to this position and voted upon favorably I think the very first thing to do is to update the rules of the committee have you to modernize me I'm just want to interject if I can yes please you have background in updating rules and regulations you've worked on that before I have I've worked I know I'm I helped create the bylaws for the virgin farmers alliance which I was elected president of have also on other nonprofit boards you know constructing the bylaws rules and processes that we use to make decisions and those those sort of things and also trying to get the resources balancing with the budget that we can work from and those sort of things okay that's

1:23:17 fantastic uh mr robes how are you doing this morning fine thank you i am so grateful to see your face and i am over here in the big island but i see you plenty of times over in st thomas so it is fine with me i really don't have too much questions for you because i know the caliber and the performance you have demonstrated consistently in your past work as a public servant and even a non-profit boards here in the virgin islands so i am grateful that you said yes because you have a wealth don't you smile but i'm saying the facts and the truth right you have a wealth of information and knowledge to share i want to ask you one critical question who are you mentoring mr robes because that's what is needed we need younger folks to be able to pass that torch along who are you mentoring either in the saint thomas district and who is here on the ground in the virgin islands we have some young people right in the conference room here gallery and they are also teaming to know who they could look to to mentor and guide them as they develop academically and socially and professionally well thank you thank you for the compliment and again it's good to see you as well there are about two years ago I connected with the future farmers of America organization and established the first parochial FFA organization here in St. Thomas at the Seventh-day Adventist School where I get an opportunity to transfer or change the mindset of some of our young people when they hear the word agriculture and along with their parents and as often as I'm asked to come

- 1:25:16 to schools i go visit provide information education as is my nature to do so and to anyone who will ask and there's no place that i go including church that someone is always asking me something about agriculture or natural resource management so specifically i'm involved with the ffa program at the saint thomas st john's 7 adventure school and i get you know people find me all the time so that that's an ongoing pledge and even if there was no FFA organization I'll be either at that school or just recently I was contacted by the bossy school where my wife works to get engaged with some children at that school so that's going to be ongoing thank you so much I just want to wrap up I don't know if my time was called I wanted to ask you and just comment on that because that's a very applaudable effort Mr. Robles and I am not surprised that you're doing it. I'm hoping that they would also, you would also look at the FAF program at Charlotte Amali High School. They had a thriving program there, the Future Farmers of America program there years ago. I don't know what is happening to it now and also at Ivana Eudora can. If we could get some persons who are soldiers like you, who are passionate about agriculture, about conservation and preservation, on the ground to help educate that next generation. It takes all of us. And so that is something that is very critical. And if we can be of support, I can be of support to you. I see that you asked for some monies. I believe that we heard you loud and clear and i definitely will be in support of getting you some money seed money and then you uh plant that and water it and make it grow okay so i'm definitely in support of that
- 1:27:23 i want to thank both of you madam chair i will be voting in the affirmative for these two gentlemen here so we could move forward with this very critical board thank you kindly for the time thank you senator Joseph for your line of questioning mr. dr. olive you weren't here I don't know if you weren't here so I don't won't say that but the as dr. mr. Robles mentioned the Virgin Islands resource conservation development council back then worked with government and other non-profits to make sure that a lot of best management were put into place there was also education and outreach there was actually training of writing grants so individuals could go out and get grants to restore ponds and all of these things so how how can you see yourself being like an us another vircnd but not having all the funding that was available through usda how do you plan to and and mr robles you can also you know give some ideas as you were a part of vircnd how do you see yourself working in somewhat that capacity can you please acknowledge dr olives mike yes thank you for for asking and i i do remember the vi cd i was uh you know took part in some of the programs myself and um you know since this conservation district started uh dissolved and then now it's coming back things have really changed times have changed and I feel like with some of my personal involvement with the being a task force member on the agricultural plan and some of these other initiatives I see that there's a lot to leverage with and you know there there are there's there's some money available for projects there there is you know the legislature passed the agricultural plan which lists a lot of things which really overlap with some of the practices that we want to encourage with sustainable production so I feel like one of the and being a farmer myself I realized the challenges that a lot of farmers day-to-day farmers have with applying for and getting help and doing those sort of things so we started the agricultural business center through the
- 1:30:09 plan and now we have a place where this is through the small the SBA and now now a farmer in any of the districts can go there and they can get help with the paperwork with writing a business plan with applying for grants with all these things so those mechanisms that were covered by some of those by them like we now have created other agencies to handle that and so I feel like there's also a lot of if we can align our initiatives with what is with working with what's in the plan so we help that be successful while we help our conservation goals be successful then that's really important and one thing that I brought to the plan as an organic farmer is I'm concerned about if we're gonna do agriculture in and change the percentage we imports 97% of our food if we're going to be successful at that sometimes in my life I've seen that be careful what you wish for because you might get it and are you really ready for what happens when it when when you achieve that you need to be prepared and have foresight. And so in agriculture, you need to think about not only the sustainability, but the regenerative ability of the form of agriculture to not just keep it how it is, but to improve the water table, the soil, the trees, the forest, the clean air, you know, the lovely environment for the public to enjoy at the same time, and not to mention all the great food. So when you can put all this together which i feel like a lot of things are happening now and then this is going to connect us with this national network of conservation districts there's funding there's all sorts of supportive things we had a group come down recently during ag fair a conservation district working group and they were here we got to talk a lot about these amazing initiatives there's things we can do instantly in this program to bring it all together so i think that's what i hope to bring is tying some of these things together so we can all benefit thank you
- 1:32:07 uh mr robles yes uh let me just make a correction on the rcnd council i was not involved directly on the board but because there's such a small handful of us who are agriculture and natural resource professionals i was out on the margins so when you as chair uh would and on the committee would recommend a project nine times out of ten I would be called in to back up as technical support or advice on many of those projects so I was very much familiar and by the way Julie

Wright sent hello spoke to her this week the so that's part of what I bring to this I've been involved in it and having an opportunity to go to the convention last year where we received the award i met with the then and i think he still is the person who is responsible for the natural resources conservation service which is part of usda uh the head office in puerto rico uh he actually looked me up because he had heard that i was nominated and he and i had an hour and a half long conversation about the possibilities and some of the things that nate mentioned and meeting with some of the other council members for nacd and the conservation districts from around the country they have sort of been waiting and when i had that initial conversation with them during hurricanes irma and maria they were waiting in fact that's why they initially funded the two district conservationist positions right then and there because they i was able to convince them that we are in a better position now and with support from the legislature because at

1:33:58 that time i would say from the 32nd legislature till now there has been a public and i emphasize public um demonstration of support for agriculture and natural resources coming from the virgin islands and little do we realize as a people that the world has become a lot smaller and so when we make statements good or bad when we talk about agriculture when we pass legislation it's no longer just isolated here in the virgin islands people are looking and so in that conversation with the head of the nrccs for the caribbean region he also understood that there was some favorable movement and nacd as well going back and looking over the record looking over the record of the the territory in response to natural resources when we reached when they reached me and we had our conversations they had a little bit of a background of what had been done by the conservation district and were willing and eager to work with us in the administration then and now to begin making available some of the things that uh nate just mentioned olive mentioned and in my conversations with nrccs they too are waiting because when they when they conduct a project here in the territory or when they provide opportunities for farmers and large land owners to engage in conservation projects there are certain cost factors and cost benefit ratios that have to come into play and they make that decision based on the conservation district and as we all know commodities resources things that we import here in the territory are much more expensive than they are in puerto rico and on the mainland and they generally have to make up have to come

1:36:00 to some decision as to how much the they're going to pay a farmer or a large landowner when they're in implementing a conservation practice or they set what the priorities are as to what projects get funded but they do it without the consultation of a local conservation district board they are eager to to to not have to do that because they also recognize around the country that there have been situations where minority communities have not been acknowledged or or provided resources as opposed to other places in the country so they are eager to work with us we're eager to work with them and we're looking forward for this board to to get birth because again opportunities to augment what the local government both department of planning and natural resources and the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture are trying to do with managing our resources can pool together to assist in helping to manage the natural resources of the people of the Virgin Islands. Thank you. Thank you both for that, because it's all about a public-private partnership, and I think you guys would be great. As I said, I know your work, so I really look forward to good things um senator bolkus you may proceed with uh six minutes uh thank you and good morning madam chair good morning colleagues good morning to the listening and viewing audience and good morning to our nominees and of course good morning to our police athletic league uh attendees this morning and parents and also officers of the vipd um i wanted to to start off with you, Dr. Oliv. Good morning. How are you doing? Good?

1:37:51 Good morning. All right. Doing great. How are you? Good. I'm good. I'm good. So you mentioned writing a management plan for the Department of Agriculture. Yes. And for the VI Forest legacy areas such as North Star, Inner Brass. Could you discuss what the outcomes were for those plans and if there were any challenges that you faced during the implementation? Yes. There are very different projects. You know, North Star is on the north coast here in St. Croix, just west of Cane Bay. It's the oldest state there. It was a property that was for sale for a while. Anybody could have bought it. There were different projects possibly proposed for the property. And at the same time, it was identified as a major conservation area being in a flood zone, the top of a flood zone, very steep terrain. Also at the base of Mount Eagle, which is a recreational area for a lot of people to go and visit the highest point. And so there was a lot of, you know, so basically what that involved is meeting a set of criteria that's established by the USDA for a forest legacy area, which is looking at the soils, the water, the forestry type, appropriate uses, slope and terrain, recreation possibilities. And so what I did is, you know, analyzed all those. I worked with professionals like. Okay. So noted.

1:39:15 So the question really derives from your knowledge and your education in the field that you're actually trying to endeavor upon. And you also indicated that you have a desire to make specific recommendations to update the VI Code, Title VII, Agriculture, Chapter 3, Soil Conservation. Yes. Could you provide an example of such update or expected impact? Well, I think that the one thing that I mentioned in my testimony is reinstating the subsoiling program, which had a cost share in making that amount adjusted for the inflation at least to do that on properties. and also as a part of the strategy that is listed in that document to look at not just individual parcels of land but how but to have targets of land parcels that are

working together because if you do all the work in this one small parcel it won't really have that benefit for everybody but if we can establish you know conservation corridors and work in areas where there's already a natural potential to get the greatest benefit out of what we're doing I think having a that nowadays since then we've moved from general conservation in the 60s and 50s and 40s and out of Leopold and all that to now where we have a better understanding of watershed hydrology and how the natural boundary is a watershed with the the peaks of the ridges and that's why we're rich to leave I only have six minutes okay sorry but i appreciate the the the explanation and perhaps targeting units is what i'm saying about that on the back end and i appreciate that conversation and before i switch over to mr robes how do you what do you believe is our greatest challenge when it comes to natural

1:41:05 and cultural resources conservation uh well i think climate change and droughts okay very well thank you and mr robes good morning sir good morning senate all right you know you're a big deal and um you know i wanted to know how you plan to uh utilize your recognition uh and network um from your induction to the nacd south east region conservation hall of fame to benefit the virgin islands conservation district well as some of us who have traveled to can francisco when you get there and they find out that you're from the virgin islands uh everybody finds you during the break and they'd have a card to hand you or a conversation to have with you regarding this exotic place that they have heard of. And so I say all that to say that the networking opportunities, both regional and national, quadrupled after that meeting. And I plan to bring and use them. I still have many contacts nationally with individuals, individuals who actually used to still work for the secretary of agriculture when he had visited here uh and they've always made themselves available and say that you know if you ever need anything give us a call and maybe in a different capacity so the opportunity to bring uh networking personnel and other individuals who have a genuine interest in the people of the virgin islands it's already there yes sir excellent and congratulations on your nomination on your nomination um with the district board being inactive for an extended period of time what immediate actions do you believe are necessary for re-establishing its presence and effectiveness well once we're able to i believe we i'm not sure if we're going to have quorum but if we don't have a quorum we're going to need at least one other bodies because the number is 11 we're going to need one individual on board immediately so that we can start the

1:43:21 business of working on some of the changes that dr olive mentioned and uh reaching out to nracs with usda both their caribbean representative and the local representative to begin establishing the goals and objectives for the conservation district so that we begin to tap into the resources that are available to us nationally okay thank you madam chair may please have one wrap-up question yes you can conclude thank you so much madam chair uh mr robes um how do you envision improving technical assistance and training for landowners and managers to implement conservation practices effectively we'll start with what we have in-house the cooperative extension service is a resource that is very rarely used and they could use some additional funding to provide that i spent many years in the cooperative extension service providing that kind of information as well regionally we have partners both non-profit and federal partners who have access to information and could provide to us individuals where there may be a gap in in in knowledge that could provide information to us and in regionally like dr olive i have contacts and and resource people around the country and around the world especially in the tropical regions, Guam, American Samoa, Hawaii, that have similar climates and have similar natural resource issues that we have that we could also tap into to provide information and education and technical advice to our people.

1:45:09 Thank you so much, Madam Chair. Thank you for your leniency. I believe we have two excellent nominees here this morning. Thank you for the time. Thank you, Senator Boulkes, for your line of questioning. At this time, I just wanted to ask Mr. Robles, the award that you reference, is that the EPA award? No. This award was given by the National Association of Conservation Districts. I think it's a southeast regional group because they are broken up I think into five or six quadrants and we're in the southeast regional section of the National Association of Conservation Districts.

1:45:49 Okay. Well, congratulations. Next we have Senator Maryse C. James. You may proceed with six minutes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I first want to begin by offering my condolences to you and your family and the extended Walcott family. May her memory be a blessing. I want to say that we have two excellent nominees to the position. Good morning Virgin Islands good morning testifiers good morning colleagues and it's great to have the Police Athletic League here because I'm going to ask Dr. Aliv a question that is going to pertain to you guys to you girls I should say some I I first want to ask still and get a little understanding the conservation district is going to be supported by the staff of the Department of Agriculture is that how it works in terms of technical and support because some of the things that I want to ask you about you would need to have staff to implement so how does that work I think that mr. Robles with his familiarity would probably be able to answer the Department of Agriculture's role and that I don't really know okay so we're gonna come to you mr. Robles so let me continue by asking you because the first question that I had was really how can the conservation district help the islands adapt to climate change because of last summer and how hot it was and I and I want to say specifically that you know when we think about conservation districts we're only thinking about farmers right but really

and truly the majority of land is owned by private landowners so how do you help not only farmers but you know landowners with their backyards how do

1:47:58 we address that issue of climate change well one thing that we have really been through i believe since 2014-15 we started to get really bad droughts that didn't seem to have happened before and like you mentioned this past summer the the heavy heat you know that's happening and uh what we can do to shield ourselves against climate change is to uh instill you know resiliency practices to buffer ourselves from the raw forces of nature and so that includes things like taking forests and shade canopy seriously as a social benefit also it includes things that we've already mentioned about you know increasing soil and infiltration to our water table so that the wells are you know that our groundwater is amply supplied because we're gonna have you know not just drought we're gonna have heavy years of rain we just moved from El Nino to La Nina very quickly you know strangely and so but when we get these heavy rains like we've had the past weeks of this winter we've had some very heavy uncharacteristic rains for was supposed to be dry season you know when it falls how much of that is actually going into the groundwater table and how much is running right off into the sea and so that's one of our biggest things is is helping you know gain and and and capture to particularly the water the strategy of slow it spread it and sink it into the ground that can be done with agricultural practices on farms doing things on contour raised beds for example there's a lot of things and they also help farmers not have their crops flood in those storms you know especially you look at the Department of Agriculture lands down there and it's very clay based so it tends to pond up a lot so we need to work on infiltration but also for the homeowner and they're in there and for you know land use and how houses how housing pads are cleared how erosion is treated on driveways and roads you know all these things can be they they add up but they they all start on individual small residential properties so i think i wanted to stop you because i want to only know that you're

1:50:18 talking about residential and we have the the young people behind you how do you in terms of projects with young people yes education outreach projects what what's what's the what do you envision because sooner or later they're going to be the ones inheriting the land and the islands so what would you say to them now as children, and how are you going to reach them in terms of projects that you may anticipate? Well, thank you for asking, because I believe firmly in the way that I try to make decisions is it's about our children, but not only our children, but their children, and their children's children. And it goes down the line to seven or more generations. And so what we can do now is get them out there to learn, to become aware, to do projects in nature. Like we have Boy Scouts, we have a lot of youth programs, there's the Weed Seed program. There's many of these groups that are looking for ways to plug in to projects. There's summer camps, there's all these things. We had great summer camps at our farm. And, you know, for the North Star plan for the park there from the Department of Agriculture that I wrote, we need, you know, volunteers and members to help build the trail, to help learn about, you know, that and to build bridges and all these things so that we create this space. Also, the State of Venture Trail, there's the VI Trails Alliance, all the great work they're doing. That could help. She's going to call my time. I do want Mr. Robles, first of all, congratulations on being in the Hall of Fame. That's wonderful. And, um, may I just, I just want to... Yes, you may proceed.

1:52:03 Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Robles, I want to find out about, um, the Conservation District. We're, we're putting members on, on, in the, as to serve, um, on the Conservation District. But I'm wondering how do you implement the projects, the outreach, the education of landowners, farmers, um, would you be utilizing the staff of the Department of Agriculture how does it work in order free you asked for you prompted this because you asked for the 540 to 545 for the part-time secretarial services and I went beyond that and thought well what about the things you want to do as a conservation district for the virgin islands essentially the district itself well thank you for the question senator chain the district itself is i don't want to say standalone entity but yes it is a standalone entity that is in partnership with the department of agriculture and the natural resources conservation service nracs at usda and it makes decisions essentially by in partnership with the nracs and the local department of agriculture to move projects not just for farmers but as you rightfully understood for large land owners and again the earth change permit process is just a classic example of the leverage and the power and the authority that the district has and so the district when it's formed it's going to meet on its own but it's not just going to be an island unto itself the Department of Agriculture at least

1:53:52 based on the law was the venue through which any local funds would come through to help the district work together when a project has designed and the district says well this is priority based on what it is on St. Croix or St. John or St. Thomas or Water Island then it filters through the planning department of the planning and natural resources all of those individuals because i believe one of the members of the board that is assigned by the governor or appointed by the governor i don't know if they have to necessarily come through the legislature i'll have to review the the law again but it's someone from the planning office so you see the integration of some of the critical portions of the office but the conservation district itself is a semi-autonomous body that is helping to direct the management of natural resources in the territory. So it pretty much meets on its own, but it's not isolated unto itself. I hope that answers your question. Thank

you, Mr. Rubles. It does, but it leads me to... I'm just going to wrap up on this. When I looked at some of the other jurisdictions it seemed as if they had like an executive director, technical and support staff and that's why I was asking the question because it seems to me if we want if you want to be effective you need that you know structure. Thank you Madam Chair.

1:55:31 yes senator James it can get that large because I've been in conversations with other districts they have the big some of them even have their own building but again depending on the size of the county and the size of the municipality they have to partner with other agencies in order to be able to facilitate the execution of programs and projects so given our situation here in the territory we may be able to build towards that and with some of the funding that is accessible to the district we may be able to build out where we have within our staff engineers surveyors etc until then we'll have to tap into the resources both local and regionally through NRCS or the Department of Agriculture and when I made my comment in my testimony regarding the uh the ponds that were built around the territory the soil conservation service had an arm in the local department of agriculture back in the day and many of the farmers then and now remember ted johnson uh he was the civil engineer that helped to to organize and to to sketch out and to design some of the dams and a part of the soil conservation service that was federally funded was actually located at the department of agriculture and so they worked together on projects when they had to build a dam or if they had to do the subsoiling as was recommended in the in the legislation they worked in partnership with each other because again they didn't have a standalone entity now there are some projects um as part of a history the history of it with

1:57:18 the earth change permit process the conservation district was the one that was actually going out and providing on-site guidance and direction when it came to building buildings or clearing for land whether it's flatland on st croix or cutting into hills on saint thomas the conservation district was the one that was responsible for issuing the permits and so ultimately that as i said in my testimony migrated over so there is some overlap but there is some there is some conversation that had that is had and is required by the district to partner with these entities that provide these resources thank you mr robles and thank you for your generous allotment of time madam chair but i really um want to say that i support both of you wholeheartedly thank you thank you senator maurice james for your line of questioning um and it just have me thinking about you know back in the day how it was with the public private partnership and all these different entities that worked with usda department of agriculture department of planning and natural resources see there was there was just a lot of organizations that came together so I'm very excited about this council you know getting started again and you guys understand the need and what we need as a territory you talk about low impact development projects lid ground water recharge I mean my hairs and my can start standing up with you know just all of the things that i know pond restorations and these are the things that um i know you guys would definitely be on the forefront as environmental stewards next we'll go to our senator on saint thomas vice chair of this committee senator potter you may proceed with six minutes thank you so very much madam chair good afternoon

1:59:31 good morning colleagues and a special good morning to the testifiers who are before us today the nominees mr carlos robles and dr natani nathaniel olive dr olive is it olive or olive i know if you're from the virgin islands it's olive it's it's olive olive tomato tomato thank you very much whatever you prefer i am very grateful that you gentlemen uh agreed to accept uh the governor's um request that you serve on this very important uh board i can think of no one better suited to serve on this board than both of you of course i'm much more familiar with uh the the work of Mr. Robles, having served in a cabinet with him when he was the Commissioner of Agriculture, as well as we all know in this community, know of his extensive work at the UVA Extension Center. He served also as a TV and radio host, providing residents with advice on agriculture, you know, A to Z agriculture.

2:00:52 So thank you very much, gentlemen, for agreeing. I wanted to ask you, beginning with you, Mr. Robles, what was your greatest, what motivated you to agree to serve on this important board? What was the greatest? uh when Mr. Levitz mentioned to me Carlos Robles yeah when Mr. Levitz had that we had a conversation a long conversation because as a new commissioner and as someone being involved on the ground with educating farmers and homeowners and others I wanted to get a perspective I wanted to get a 64 000 view perspective of agriculture in the territory land management and that type of thing and when he he mentioned to me that it was the conservation district that was responsible for the earth change project that is when it hit me that this and that this thing wasn't functioning now that's when it hit me that man this this conservation this and then he started calling names of people who i knew clifford benjamin out in the bordeaux area and others who were on this board and some of the things i saw occurring on the islands growing up here in saint thomas and visiting my my aunt and my uncles in in campo rico and saint roy i realized that that this thing needed to continue it must continue because all of our soils are ending up in the sea we're not like many of the states where you know things could settle out in an area ultimately all of this is ending in into the ocean and the uh you know rather experience hurricanes and floods and

- 2:02:45 wash you know the whole island be surrounded with mud i said man this is another opportunity even though it isn't directly related to agriculture per se but it is involved in agriculture this is another opportunity for me to join in and remembering something that occurred and being a part of an organization in my youth also clicked in and i said you know what this is a no-brainer if they want me i'll accept the job what do you think what do you see as the greatest single greatest attribute that you bring to the table that will enhance the quality of this board The fact that both my networking with my years of being with the extension service, along with the fact that I provided things like composting training, sustainable farm management for small farmers, plus my own experience in doing a little farming, working with DPNR, working with people like Nate.
- 2:03:47 um nate is an excellent example of conservation in a large wide area those things combine um like i said and also with the networking because part of the reason why i came back home i could have stayed like many virgin islanders away sure is because i had begun to develop relationships with people who could help the virgin islands move forward i could be in a way different position right now but i have i got you i'm making those connections there are people who want to help thank you somebody has to be here to help director thank you for that i'm gonna ask this question to to you i know that dr olive mentioned us elaborated thoughts on climate change and i wanted you to weigh in a little bit about climate change here its impact in the virgin islands are we aware of its impact are we doing enough um intentionally with regards to just climate change adaptation as well as you know what we can do to minimize its its impact um your thoughts on that and your role uh on this board how can you speak to climate change uh is there a role for a member of the board for the for the conservation district to address issues of climate change here in the territory olive or your friend you first and then we'll have uh dr olive okay absolutely and as part of the conservation district we cover everything it covers time soil it covers erosion it covers tree canopy and one of the other resources that i have is the fact that i'm a certified arborist both national and international and the push for canopy cover over the territory is absolutely necessary so those are some of the kinds of things that we would be looking at projects to institute
- 2:05:58 in the conservation district thank you very much madam shay i know that my time was called if i can just have dr olive response to respond to that yes thank you um ecological thinking that's what we need that's what we need to bring together to teach we have it i like fish i like coral reefs they inspire me so much and to watch them decline so much they've done studies that show that what happens on land is that you know when you have these global things like the raising of sea temperatures it creates coral bleaching and that weakens the corals they can't eat for half the day so they die when they get other diseases a lot of the they're more resilient what they find when what's happening in the land isn't dumping as much nitrogen and heavy sediment load into the reef so you know we need to think about how the land combines with the sea and then everybody wants to see more fish in the sea everybody wants to return to the days you went out and there were lobster right out there in the traps and so the other part is the government what excites me to answer your question is i see everything is on the cusp when i talk to people everybody believes that local food is we should have it in the schools we should have it everywhere they believe that we should have forests we should have more beautiful you know i feel like across the board there's a lot of commonality but things operate in silos and so we need ecological thinking for the decision making and for the sharing of resources for leveraging what is going on working together not separately to solve these ecological problems that we face.
- 2:07:39 Thank you very much for your feedback. Thank you for your information. Thank you for your willingness to solve gentlemen at the appropriate time. I will vote in the affirmative for both of you to be appointed to this very valuable board. Thank you very much for your flexibility Madam you you're welcome senator Franklin D Johnson you may proceed with six minutes more good morning miss madam chair thank you very much for this opportunity good morning to my colleagues good morning to the testifiers morning to the young ladies of pal welcome you guys are learning a lot here today about farming at least and I think when mr. Nate spoke he talked about we important 90% of our food 90% that's a lot you know there isn't no doubt in my mind that both of you gentlemen will definitely bring a lot to the table my question is why it took so long but you're here and I'm glad I'm glad to see you here I had the opportunity of meeting now I know dr. Nate as I relatively call him Nate and Olive we had some work together with your farming And I work along with Commissioner Robles as part of the administration. And I say thank you to both of you for your willingness to solve it. I want to kind of stay on the subject that you guys touched just now with the water and all the sediments running into the sea. And my question will be, what is it going to take for us to get these dams put back in place? And how do you guys see yourself as part of a lining? Because those dams are there. They just need to really get some work done to them and try slowing down all of that sediment and all of that soil erosion that's going to see. So you could start out, Dr. Nate, and then we go to Mr. Commissioner Robles.
- 2:09:28 Yeah, I think that, first of all, we need to look at each island, each of the three major in water islands. So all the islands, look at the watersheds, and every watershed is defined by having one pore point. That pore point is where what happens to the land, dumps into the ocean where in the northwest of St. Croix where I am it's creaky dam and in our watershed

there is a dam there that you know that's famously underutilized and it's full of sediment that's one big problem with the dam is even when there's no water in it if you look over it's full it's so full of sediment that it's just a few feet below the the wall so you we don't even know if there is water in it because it could be all in the soil you know so we need to clear out a lot of this we need to deal with the erosion that has occurred so that these things can function properly there's a lot of rehabilitation on ponds a non-point point source sediment pollution areas that you know we need to basically what I was saying earlier with water we need to slow it spread it and sink it that's the trick and we need to get it into the water table so that there's less going into the guts there's left for them to deal with but then when it's there it's clean water and it can be utilized versus being a big mess which is kind of what we have now former Commissioner Robles second I ditto to what dr. Ali sent and also with us as the community we community members need to take the recommendations from dpnr seriously if you're going to cut and clear land do it responsibly do it appropriately get information get education get technical advice because it affects all of us when a land is cleared and cut soil is going to move that's a natural occurrence you can't avoid that however installing silt fences installing barriers

2:11:30 installing the things that are needed cut only what is necessary you don't necessarily have to clear from corner to corner from pungos to bumphos in order to have that and even if you end up doing that replant the area cover it with trees cover it with whatever is necessary so that a clean soil does not have to be a bare soil and we're not just talking about farming this is construction across the board so we as members of the community and then dpnr and the other agencies who provide guidance and direction and oversight into land movement and land clearing need to be able to effectively do their jobs my next question goes to both of you again what are some of the challenges that you see and what would it what you guys will need what it will take what would you need to get this conversation district board effective and i'll start this time from robles and then come to dr nate well right now we need to have the additional member's name because as of this point we the board doesn't would not have it doesn't have a quorum so they can meet and have a conversation but unless we have at least six persons appointed by the governor or and approved by this body and the others that represent the territorial government we could just have conversations but we can't take any action that is absolutely number one for us to move then one some stop because once we do get a quorum if we have to go to national meetings or if we have to invite someone in we can we could at least start something in in executing our responsibilities and dr nate yes thanks for asking uh one thing is budget i'm not really aware of what the budget that is there, but it sounds like this conversation has really made me aware that we need to have some sort of budget to function, to have secretarial work and travel and those sort of things. And as we see how old some of the rules are from 1960s, we need to really look at that. Maybe we could start getting ideas before we have a quorum to vote

2:13:51 or to make these bigger decisions, but I think we need to move fast so that we can function. thank you very much and commissioner roberts you say needs an additional six more members to what amount you need to actually have a quorum how much members do you need time to my knowledge if both dr oliv and i are approved we will only have five and so we can't do any official business total number of members are uh total number of members are that you actually 11. so wow 11 and two already appointed i think up to two years ago i think dale brown and diane brooks and i believe uh mr tessitore but it's been at least two years since they've been appointed oh you know it's in it's encouraging and and i definitely will be supporting both of you gentlemen but um at the same time it's a little disheartening knowing that you still won't have a quorum with you guys and some of the members as you say already been there two years so they're probably on the last year so that's the little discouraging part and i i sure hope that the governor would um expedite and get more members i think everyone that the governor has sent us far we have approved i really see this body disapproving any of the members that the governor have sent down to this committee so it's important that we get people on board and sometimes it's hard to get people to solve and I understand that but we got to push things this to make this thing work farming is very essential conservation is very essential and if we stay here and not have this board doing the role and the job that they can do to execute and make things happen we're stalemate and as dr. Nate said earlier more ever you're hearing about farming both the need for us to really take

2:15:42 agriculture serious you know if we can't eat ourselves with some of the simple produce like tomato cucumber lettuce we have to continue bringing all of this food in it could be a day we could find ourselves looking for something to eat again thank you both gentlemen for willing to serve I wish you all the best in your endeavor thank you very much thank you Senator Johnson at this time Mr. Robles, you wanted to make a comment? Yes, I just wanted to add to the conversation, and I know both Nate and I are associated exclusively with agriculture, which is nice.

2:16:25 But what I wanted to educate this committee on, as Dr. Olive said, we're thinking bigger than just agriculture. This is about the management of our soil, water, and our flora and fauna in and around the Virgin Islands. Farming is included, but it also deals with the management of construction, buildings, water resources, guts, streams. Everything is included in the role of the conservation district. and we appreciate agriculture will benefit and Nate and I will continue to do our part along those lines.

- 2:17:08 But I want us to think about the bigger picture in terms of the management because it not only includes the four Virgin Islands, if you want to include Water Island, but even our offshore Keys. Thank you. You know, when I worked at the DPNR Environmental Protection, I worked in a program called, as you guys know, Non-Point Source Pollution. and it is so important as you guys sit here and you talk about that that we as a people we need to be the protectors and we need to learn not throwing things in the gut taking your use away from the cars that you change yourself that you think that you you're killing the grass but you contaminating groundwater there's a lot of things that we as individuals thought it was good then but it has a serious environmental impact it has an impact to the groundwater so you know this education and outreach is very important to the territory and that's why you know programs in the departments it's very important that they continue to do these missions of educating the public because it's very important because on those rainy days all of these different contaminants from the construction site leaking septic systems all of these things are picked up and those go straight into our guts so as I tell you I you know I used to eat sleep and drink the stuff protecting their environment that's why I'm passionate um senator francis you may proceed with six minutes thank you very much madam chair good morning to you and good morning to my colleagues good morning to the nominees good morning to the people of versions of course good morning to our students from pal police athletic league and it warms my heart to see these young ladies here today and you know of my passion and
- 2:19:14 and my feelings for VIPD and PAL. After all, I spent 25 years of my life there. So, also to the representative of the Verzales Police Department, good morning. First of all, I wanna thank you, former commissioner Robles and Dr. Oliv for accepting the challenge of this nomination to serve on this very important board and to remind you that there's no pay a lot that work for no pay so thank you for doing that and you realize there was no pay right i did um yeah that's just a light moment but certainly thank you we do need volunteers in our community and we appreciate that so i wanted to i had to step out so if there's any questions that have been already asked and answered um certainly let me know and we could just move on but one of One of the things that was mentioned, especially by you, Dr. Olive, or Nate, is in regards to the National Heritage Area designation.
- 2:20:22 That's right. Which I think is extremely important, and I was a strong advocate for that for a number of years. What do you see as the benefit of us, the Virgin Islands and Cinco in particular, being designated National Heritage Area? MR. Well, the benefit of it is that it will bring technical assistance and funding to help succeed in the initiatives that are driven and defined by the people of what the Virgin Islands, because it's St. Croix, you know, see as their important natural and cultural heritage.
- 2:21:02 When we did the public participation process with the Park Service, that's what I centered my PhD dissertation on and we really went deep to hear from people about how they define that and what came out is that there's a lot of care about the natural environment and culture and how it intertwines and it's there's a lot of things still alive and that's the heritage so I think that it can that you know it's it was just designated they're working on creating a plan which would then be approved and then that will open up once the plan is in place more technical assistance and funding for these initiatives I thank you for saying that and there is no question in my mind that both of you are certainly suitable and qualify for this position I would never begin to second-guess that and truly when we see based on the Virgin Islands code there's a lot a lot of room for amendment to your scope of responsibility do you agree with that yes how do you how would you submit each of you real quickly how would you submit that has be addressed do you believe that the core members of this board now should be able to send recommendations to this body or through the governor so that we can make those amendments yes senator yes I believe so very well so I look forward to getting those recommendations at some point so could move those things forward so we spoke a little bit about food security and food sustainability here and you made the point that your role is not just about agriculture but more importantly the environment the topography of the virgin islands and you know by the way as we traverse these these island here here in singapore in particular we have several locations that our topography differs right we have caliche um when you go down into the sandy point area you have a different
- 2:23:01 soil. We have some soils up in the Cal Cahoon, Montbejo, Glen area that opens up and creates like veins and stuff like that. So there is, my question to you is how do we address the issue of not having a one size fit all in terms of our legislation or policies and regulations because again, based on where you may be located, the soil differs. yeah I could answer that I mentioned earlier about I believe that we need to look at these units as watersheds and look at them one at a time because if you're talking about soil and erosion that poor point that each watershed has one of that's how it's defined that is the unit and a lot of the watersheds we see in the soil type there's their soil type maps of the Virgin Islands and you're exactly right there's different soil profiles they're rocky there's different slopes and terrains and levels of rockiness, texture and all those things, they will usually require a different management based on that.

- 2:24:06 Like we wouldn't put a steep road in on a very steep slope without certain best operating procedures in place for that construction, but you could do that in the flatter area that has the clay soil. So those things are always gonna be taken into account, but I think the watershed level what we need to look at for the biggest environmental benefit. So a quick story, we were able to get a conviction of a crime that was committed many years ago over at Sandy Point because the soil in Sandy Point was just germane to that location. And we were able to determine that in fact the results of that soil being on a vehicle's wheel could have only been because that person had been to Sandy Point. So again, this soil is very important.
- 2:24:54 Real quickly, in regards to, and I know that there were some questions, wow, that was fast. Madam Chair, may I just wrap up real quickly? You may conclude, Senator. Well, we won't touch the global warming and climate change since that was, I heard that might have been addressed. But I wanted to ask you, in regards to the whole issue of education, how do we begin to continue to educate the public and what mechanism should we use in order to educate the public in regards to the proper maintenance of our soil, the erosion that's occurring, our guts and those type of things. How do we bring that to the attention? And it's a twofold. And let's talk a little bit about technology. How can we incorporate technology into the work that you're doing as well? If you just answer those two things real quickly with the remaining time I'll appreciate it thank you very much madam mr robles you wanna that for me out having like the young people there as as they are today but going back using the various mediums all of them social media normal regular things like radio tv all the mediums as an opportunity to transfer information in the simplest form sesame street style to everyone at every level and that's something i think that does not happen often enough from some of our agencies and including non-profits so providing that information in in any form any type supporting organizations that promote that type of thing also works well in helping to to get the message out um there was another question that you asked that i could you repeat the second part of your question senator yeah i was asking
- 2:26:50 about technology how do we incorporate and utilize technology in the work that you're um intended to do absolutely one of my favorite agencies of which i had used while i was commissioner of agriculture was the office that is under lieutenant governor's office that's gis information and they are one of the most underutilized agency among government offices they have the capacity to map and with the updated lidar technology and uh drone cameras that they have there they have already begun to map portions of the virgin islands they're using it for the road project but we had them use it to map all the lands for the virgin islands department of agriculture as well as other projects so using the current technology allows us to be able to have some to make decisions a lot quicker because rather than having to we don't have someone to be able to go to an area or we don't have a resource person we could pull this entire watershed up on a map and through video conferencing and zoom and all the other uh adaptive technologies we could have conversations with individuals around the world regarding our local situation to help make you know solid management decisions senator proceed thank you just just real quickly one other issue that we talk about is in terms of the amount of people that's actually named to the board of members and the lack of a quorum how do you propose that the lack of quorum be addressed i am recommending perhaps allowing for the majority for the membership to be reduced and that the majority on a sunset reasonable time base be able to make some decision in the meantime until you could have all of the members or the reduction of the required number of individuals to serve on this board. It's important that we're able to not just move nominees but in fact that you'll be able to function and operate
- 2:29:03 and the only way to be able to do that is to be able to ascertain a quorum. How do you propose that we address that? I'm not particularly familiar with all the bylaws because I haven't seen them but if we are able to do that in a temporary basis that we could be very helpful and you know possibly to get the other members if anybody else has been designated passed quickly but I think if we need to change the rules then we should if we can Carlos Robles if the addition of according to the law I think there's someone from the Planning Board that automatically is a part of this district if there are voting member that would make six and we would be able to function accordingly because then you'd have to to we'd be able to create the leadership the chairman vice chairman and all the other officers and we could move accordingly thank you so this is the call individuals who are willing to serve your community, who has a passion to conserving, protecting, that we ask you to accept when the governor asks for you to serve on this board, because it's very important. I believe we need one more individual. I think we had that one person, but they had to step down due to a family emergency. So at this time, colleagues, we have concluded block one.
- 2:30:42 Are there any other questions before we go to a motion? Well, I will give you guys a closing remark. So would you want to take that now or it was a question or a concern? I was just wondering if my letters of recommendation Yes, we received it. That's all, thank you. Yes. So at this time, I will allow you to give like 30 seconds to wrap up, and then we'll go to Mr. Robles. Well, thank you very much for the opportunity and for the time this morning, and for everybody out there listening. It's been an honor, especially with Mr. Robles, who I admire so much in the same session, and I look forward, I can already see us working well together just in this conversation. And I asked the Senate to help approve a budget and whatever we need to get the quorum going. And I think that us and the other members will do some good

welcoming our police athletic league youngsters i'm happy to see that the program is still going because as young as I am I came through the PAL program as well and madam chair and colleagues I also wanted to take the opportunity to highlight as we observe Virgin Islands history month and women's history month if media could assist me I wanted I am very ecstatic to share one of our local gyms with you, Ms. Kalija Bellardo, who is featured in this month's Texas Women's University website for her vision and accomplishments. She is from the island of St. Croix, hailing from the west, and is a first-year student in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program on the Texas women's Houston campus. And although she misses home and her close-knit family, every single day she says she's determined to come back home as a physical therapist to inspire and help her people here on St. Croix.

2:54:53 To say that I am proud of this young lady would be an understatement. Good job, Kalija, and youngsters, I encourage you to do the same. We did have a picture of her to show, but they're having a little technical difficulty. And just before I stop, let me just say, she was quoted by saying on national media that, and this is a quote from her, I just feel that the people of my island are so special. I just love them so much.

2:55:28 My life can be great somewhere else, but there is something about being on my island, the energy of my island, the people. I feel like my people have been in survival mode for many years. It's important that our people come back home and take care of each other. So I say that to you young ladies that are here, take note of that, that even when you go off to college and better yourself remember this is always home thank you uh madam chair and colleagues oh uh the picture of the young lady is up again this is miss kalija belardo from frederickstead st croix thank you thank you senator gittins um colleagues we will proceed into block two who speaks to bill number 35-0077 and bill number 35-0211 bill number 35-0225 senator mr. president you may proceed thank you very much madam chair for the opportunity to present these three bills bill 35.0077 bill number 35.0211 and bill number 35.0225 all of these matters were heard in the committee of jurisdiction and of course bill number 35.0077 was sent down at the request of the governor and is intended to give some stability to the St. inquiry st thomas rescue inc and support their overall rescue operations bill number 35.0077 is an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the virgin islands acting through

2:57:22 the commissioner of the department of property and procurement and the st thomas rescue inc parcel number 146 revised submarine base number six southwest quarters in thomas virgin islands consisting of a one-story building and approximately 0.1899 U.S. acres of improved land more or less zone P for the purpose of operating a long-term headquarters for all rescue-related activities of the leasee and for other related purposes bill number 35.0211 an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the versions acting through its commissioner of department of property and procurement and james o gaston for plot number 9g vi corpse land prince quarters and thomas virgin islands consistent of approximately 653 400 u.s square feet or 15 u.s acres of unimproved land more or less as shown and drawing number a 9-5-c zero zero eight to be used for crop production and rearing small livestock and finally bill number 35-0211 this measure is offered at the request of governor brian again and directly supports agriculture and the territory's goal towards territory's goal to work towards a greater production and stability of our locally grown food supply and bill number 35-0225 an act approving the multi-year lease agreement between the government to the versions acting through the commission of department of property and procurement and the version center for architecture crafts and build heritage st croix inc doing business as the version architecture center for built heritage and crafts for plat number eight church street and number 21 22 and 23 hospital street christianstead

2:59:23 town company quarters in core u.s version is consistent of two two-story masonry buildings to be used for common good welfare and education of the people of the versions heritage and culture legacy and for other related purposes this lease would support vx mission to transform the old barracks into an innovative educational center that teaches virgin island youth and others who want to learn historic architecture and building arts crafts necessary to rehabilitate the large inventory of historic property on the island of st croix again i asked for my colleagues support on these measures and um they were heard in the committee of jurisdiction and now just going through the uh clearinghouse of uh the committee of Rules and Judiciary for further vetting, and I appreciate any support you can give to move these measures forward. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, for the time and opportunity.

3:00:22 Thank you, Senator Francis. Colleagues, as the Senator said, we have already vetted these bills in its Committee of Jurisdiction, but I'm giving everyone the opportunity, if you want to have comments on these three bills in block two i will give everyone three minutes senator carla joseph you may proceed with three minutes thank you so much madam chair madam chair as the introduction of the bills were read into the record they were and I attended those meetings and we did hear from each individuals what they purport to do as well as the Department of Property and Procurement for bill number 35-0077 this definitely is a good fit for St. Thomas Rescue to be able to utilize a one-story building on approximately 0.1899 U.S. acres to operate their long-term headquarters. St. Thomas Rescue has been a very integral part of our community, especially in the district of st thomas st john and have performed excellent in a need when we need

people to be underground efficiently and really quickly to rescue lives and save lives so i definitely rise in support of this really vital lease agreement to stabilize them and to assure that they have a home bills number 35-0211 as well as bill number 35-0225 are really economic

3:02:24 boosters for the island district of saint croix bill number 35-0211 is a lease agreement to actually for VI co-op lands to actually do some crop production and rearing of small livestock. We just heard in the previous block about how important agriculture is, the growing of our food, but what I particularly like about this lease is that they're looking at small livestock. That would be like sheep, goats, pigs, those are small livestock. So definitely that is geared towards us being sustainable for our food supply. Then we have bill number 35 that's 0225 and in particular this This business, the Virgin Islands Center for Architecture, Crafts, and Build Heritage of St. Croix, and they're doing business as the Architecture Center for Built Heritage and Crafts. If I recall, they have already started some of this work and have been able to get funding to support their mission. What they plan to do is utilize the two-story, two-story masonry buildings to be used for common good, welfare, and most importantly for me, education of the people of the Virgin Islands on heritage and our cultural legacy. So definitely I stand ready to support both bills and vote them up affirmatively.

3:04:17 you so much madam chair thank you senator joseph senator bolquez you may proceed with three minutes thank you madam chair madam chair and colleagues i am in support of all the measures in this block bill number 350077 ensures that the saint thomas rescue inc secures a long-term headquarters bolstering their emergency response capabilities and their commitment to the safety of our people Bill number 350211 promotes sustainable agriculture and livestock rearing on the island of St. Croix, therefore enhancing our food security and economic diversification. It supports our local farmers, but also moves us closer to agricultural self-sufficiency. As for Bill No. 35-0225, it facilitates the preservation and the promotion of our rich heritage and culture through education and community engagement. The Virgin Islands Agriculture Center for Built Heritage and Crafts will serve as a beacon of a learning and inspirational center for our residents and perhaps even our visitors. Madam Chair, I rise in support of all these measures and look forward to voting at the appropriate time. Thank you for the time, Madam Chair.

3:05:44 Thank you, Senator Bolquez. At this time, we will go to Senator Potter on the island of St. Thomas. Thank you so very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, colleagues, I am absolutely supportive of all of the bills in block number two beginning with bill number 35-0077 the lease agreement between property and procurement and st thomas rescue absolutely this is an opportunity for us to bring a permanent home to this very um important if not indispensable organization here in the territory uh the work that they do is quite literally life-saving and placing them in a permanent facility is absolutely is a good thing so i am supportive of that initiative for sure bill number 35 that's zero two one one another lease agreement between the government of the virgin islands department of property and procurement and the virgin islands and james o gaskin um for unimproved land really to be used for the rearing of small livestock and crop production in the territory um clearly that is something that is very positive. We are vulnerable when it comes to food security in our territory. I believe the last suppliers who were here indicated that 97% of our food has been imported. So this gives us a great opportunity to increase our food production. Similarly, I am also very supportive of the final lease agreement, Bill No. 35.025, to provide education and heritage and our culture to Virgin Islanders. So at the appropriate time, Madam Chair, I plan to vote in the affirmative for all the bills in this block.

3:08:02 Thank you. Thank you, Senator Potter. Senator Gittins, you may proceed with three minutes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I wouldn't need three minutes. Colleagues, I am poised to support all three of these measures at the appropriate time. I just, however, want to highlight 35.0077. I'll be definitely happy to move that bill forward as we secure a home for our rescue individuals. So at the appropriate time, I'll be voting in the affirmative on all three measures. Thank you.

3:08:44 Thank you, Senator Gittins. At this time, I will just say that I am in support of these measures before this committee today. I understand the need for Bill No. 35-0077. The St. Thomas Rescue has been in need of a home for a very long time, so I'm very happy to see that it's on a roll bill number 35-0211 also i understand the the need for this so i am in support this bill of course it says it's to be used for crop production and rearing small livestock we just came out of a a block one which addresses and helps to make sure that sustainability preservation so I'm hoping that this would help that improvement also of I should say conservation bill number 35-0225 I am in need I'm definitely in support of this as they too are looking for a home to preserve our heritage and and culture, so I am definitely in support. So the sponsor of these three measures, I will allow you to have your three minutes, three minutes, Senate President.

3:10:20 Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Again, I simply will take this opportunity to ask for my colleagues' support in moving these three bills forward. The bills were vetted in the Committee of Jurisdiction and now being processed through the Committee of Rules and Judiciary and will be sent on, once approved, to the full body for further consideration, which will be March the 25th. So I'm asking for my colleague's support in moving these measures forward and continue the work that have started in these three very, very important economic drivers for the territory. Thank you very much,

Madam Chair.

- 3:11:00 Thank you, Senator Francis. this time excuse me do I hear a motion motion Senator Gittins thank you madam chair and colleagues I move that bill number 35 the zero zero seven seven an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the Virgin Islands acting through its commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement and st. Thomas rescue Inc parcel number 146 revised submarine base number six Southwest quarter st. Thomas Virgin Islands consisting of a one-story building on approximately 0.1899 US acres of improved land more or less zoned P for the proposed sorry for the purpose of operating a long-term headquarters for all rescue related activities of the Lisi and for other related purposes. I so move. Motion properly made by Senator Kenneth Gittins and seconded by Senator Carla Joseph and Senator Bolquez. Did I hear another second? Madam Clerk roll call and bill number thirty five dash zero zero seven seven Senator Angel L. Bowkes Jr. Senator Bowkes Jr. Yay. Senator Diane T. Capehart.
- 3:12:37 Yes. Senator Capehart, Yay. Senator Kenneth L. Gittins. Senator Gittins, Yay. Senator Maurice C. James. Senator James absent. Senator Franklin D. Johnson. Senator Johnson, yay. Senator Carla J. Joseph. Senator Joseph, yay. Senator Milton E. Potter. Senator Potter, yay. Madam Chair, you have six yays, one absent. Thank you, Madam Clerk.
- 3:13:14 Bill number 35-0077, an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the Virgin Islands, acting through the through its Commissioner of Department of Property and Procurement and St. Thomas Rescue, Inc. Parcel number 146, Revised Submarine Base Number 6, Southwest Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, consisting of a one-story building on approximately 0.1899 acres, U.S. acres of improved land, more or less zone P, for the purpose of operating a long-term headquarters for all rescue-related activities of the lacy and for other related purposes has been voted favorably by the Committee on Rules and Judiciary and will be reported out of this committee to the full body for full consideration. Do I hear a motion on bill number 35-0211? motion madam chair motion senator Carla Joseph madam chair I move that bill number 35-0211 an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the Virgin Islands acting through its commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement and James Augustine for plot number 9-G VI Corp lands, Prince Quarter, St. Croix, Virgin Islands, consisting of approximately 653,400 U.S. square foot or 15 U.S. acres of unimproved land, more or less as shown on drawing number A9-5-C008 to be used for crop production and rearing small livestock be voted upon favorably in the Committee on Rules and Judiciary and forwarded to the full body for further consideration and action. I so move. Motion properly made by Senator Carla Joseph and seconded by Senator Angel Borges. Madam Clerk might have roll call on bill number 35-0211. Senator Angel L. Borges Jr.
- 3:15:58 Senator Borges Jr. yea. Senator Diane T. Capehart. Yes. Senator Capehart yea. Senator Kenneth L. Gittins. Yes. Senator Gittins yea. Senator Maurice C. James. senator james absent senator franklin d johnson senator johnson yay senator carla j joseph senator joseph yay senator milton e potter senator potter yay madam chair you have six yays one absent thank you madam clerk bill number 35-0211 an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the Virgin Islands, acting through its commissioner of Departments of Property and Procurement and the St. Thomas Rescue, Inc., Parcel Number 146, Revised Submarine Base Number 6, Southwest Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, consisting of a one story on approximately 0.1899 us acres of improved land more or less zone p for the purpose of operating a long-term headquarters long-term headquarters for all rescue related activities i'm sorry i am reading the the last one i am sorry so bill number 35 0211 an act approving the lease agreement lease agreement between the government of the virgin island acting through its commissioner of department of property and procurement and james o gaston for plot number 9g vi corp lands prince quarter street st croix virgin islands consisting of approximately 653 400 u.s square feet or 15 u.s acres of unimproved land more or less as shown on drawing number 98-5-C008 to be used for crop production in rearing small livestock
- 3:18:23 has been voted by this committee on rules and judiciary favorably and will be forwarded from this committee to the committee of for the full body for full consideration I know motion motion madam chair motion senator Carla Joseph thank you so much madam chair madam chair I move the bill number 35 that 0 2 to 5 an act approving the multi-year lease agreements between the government of the Virgin Islands acting through its Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement and Virgin Islands Center for Architecture, Crafts and Build Heritage St. Croix Inc. doing business as Virgin Islands Architecture Center for Built Heritage and Crafts for plot number 8 Church Street and plots numbers 21, 22, and 23 Hospital Street, Christianstead Town, Company Quarter, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, consisting of two two-story masonry buildings to be used for the common good, welfare, and education of the people of the Virgin Islands on heritage and cultural legacy and for other related purposes be voted upon favorably in the Committee on Rules and Judiciary and forwarded to the full body for further action and consideration. I so move.
- 3:20:16 Motion properly made by Senator Carla Joseph and seconded by Senator Angel Borges rural call and bill number 35-0225. Senator Angel L. Borges, Jr. Senator Borges, Jr., yea. Senator Diane T. Capehart. Yes. Senator Capehart, yea.

Senator Kenneth L. Gittins. Senator Gittins, yea. Senator Maurice C. James. Senator James absent.

- 3:20:55 Senator Franklin D. Johnson. Senator Johnson, yea. Senator Carla J. Joseph. Senator Joseph, yea. Senator Milton E. Potter. Yes. Senator Potter, yea. Madam Chair, you have six yays, one absent. Thank you, Madam Clerk. Bill number 35-0225, an act approving the multi-year lease agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands, acting through its Commissioner of Department of Property and Procurement, the Virgin Islands Center of Architect, Crafts, and Build Heritage, St. Croix, Inc., DBA, Virgin Islands Architect Center for Build Heritage and Crafts, for For Plot No. 8, Church Street and Plot No. 21, 22, and 23, Hospital Street, Christianstead Town, Company Quarter, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, consisting of two two-story masonry buildings to be used for the common good, welfare and education of the people of the Virgin Islands on heritage and cultural legacy and for other related purposes, has been voted upon favorably by this committee on rules and judiciary and will be reported out of this committee to the full body for full consideration colleagues we have just completed block two And at this time, I will take a two-minute recess.
- 3:23:01 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Let's get started. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. The Committee of Rules and Judiciary is out of recess.
- 3:36:06 Colleagues, we are now ready for Block 3 and I will ask Bill No. 35-0133 who speaks on this bill? You may proceed, Senator Bolquez. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, colleagues, I speak to Bill No. 350133, an act amending Title 17, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 15, relating to scholarships by adding 190 GG to establish an educational scholarship program to support individuals interested in pursuing careers in the maritime industry of the Virgin Islands. This bill introduces an educational scholarship program aimed to nurturing generations of maritime professionals. This is a strategic investment in our youths and the maritime industry of the Virgin Islands, which promises economic growth and enhanced maritime opportunities for our people. This scholarship is designed to provide financial support to those residents who are committed to pursuing those careers in the maritime related fields such as shipping logistics marine engineering naval architecture maritime law maritime sciences and the list goes on we had the bill heard in the committee of budget and finance and there were a number of amendments that were recommended for the bill by either colleagues or stakeholders those amendments have been incorporated in uh amendment number amendment number three five dash six six eight which has been properly circulated to uh everyone here in the committee and i'm looking forward to bringing that amendment in order to uh bring the bill to its full fruition and move it forward to the entire
- 3:38:00 body if so done by the members today with your support i ask for your support on bill number 35-0133. Madam Chair thank you so much for the time. Thank you Senator Bulquez. Who speaks on bill number 35-0172? An act amending title 29 chapter 5 Virgin Islands Code relating to building codes. Senator Donna Fred Gregory is here but we will hear discussion on that bill. Is not here. Bill number who speaks on bill number 35-0182 an act amending title 14 of the virgin islands code of chapter 51 by designating the existing provisions as sub chapter one and adding sub chapter two relating to the non-consensual dissemination of sexual explicit images who's speaking i do madam chair okay um senator polquez thank you madam chair madam chair and colleagues uh i rise in support of bill number three five dash zero one eight two and i commending title 14 of virgin islands code chapter 51 by designating uh the existing provisions as chapter sub chapter one and adding a sub chapter two relating to the non-consensual dissemination of sexually explicit images this bill addresses an urgent need to protect individuals their dignity and privacy by criminalizing the non-consensual dissemination of sexual images this bill is a vital measure to help fight against digital harassment and what would be considered a digital cyber crime in a sense of harassment. I do commend the bill sponsor, the original bill sponsor, Senator Donna Fred Gregory, for the work that she's done. I am a sponsor as well, along with many other senators that have signed on to this measure. This is a step forward in securing the privacy of our digital age, and I see this as a very important measure for our young people especially so I look forward to voting in the affirmative at the appropriate time thank you madam chair thank you senator
- 3:40:28 Bulquez who speaks to bill number 35-0218 an act amending title 24 Virgin Islands code chapter 12 relating to the unemployment benefits the bill sponsors stepped away but colleagues we would proceed with three minutes in this block starting with Senator Carla Joseph you may proceed three minutes thank you so much madam chair madam chair I rise in support of all four measures that will be voted upon in this block this final block they have been vetted properly through the committees of jurisdiction bill number 35-0133 seeks to amend the Virgin Islands code title 17 of the Virgin Islands code chapter 15 relating to scholarships for educational scholarship for individuals who are interested in pursuing a maritime industry maritime industry specifically is in a marine industry and of course we know that this is one of the demand driven industries that we have here in the Virgin Islands so I'm in full support of this piece of legislation and I would like to commend the bill sponsor I understand that an amendment is going to be coming forward now bill number

35 that 0172 is related to our nationally recognized consensus based codes these of guidelines initially and now we are going to codify them the Commissioner of Department of Property I'm sorry the Department of Planning Natural and Resources the Honorable Oriel Jean Pierre Oriel mentioned that this is all

3 : 42 : 29 that this seeks to do so we are really increasing our building codes and using consensus-based codes and standards to amend the codes to put the best interests of the territory in the forefront. Then we have bill number 35.0182 an act amending title 14 of the Virgin Islands Code chapter 51 by designating the existing provisions to address non-consensual dissemination of sexually explicit images so this is very critical for us especially when we have one minute persons really transferring and distributing without the person who picture is depicted sexually explicit images especially for those who are minors so we really I really want to commend the bill sponsor for this particular bill and finally we have bill number 35 that's zero two one eight which allows for the unemployment benefits by reducing the number of weeks that unemployment benefits can be received one of the key thing is we want people to be back out into the workforce and to be active in the workforce and we have seen an increase of individuals choosing not to re-enter the workforce because they're still receiving their unemployment benefits this bill will make it more will make it possible for them to return to the workforce quicker and to be able to provide the services that are much needed so madam chair and colleagues I rise in support of all four bills that will be voted upon in this

3 : 44 : 25 block thank you so kindly Thank You Senator Joseph Senator Johnson you may proceed thank you very much madam chair I rise in support of all these measures in this block definitely in support of scholarship once it comes to the maritime which is a very big industry in this territory that is rarely tapped into to and utilized by our young people and if they could only understand the amount of money they come in this arena here and this arena tends to grow as we look in our harbors we see more and more ships are now coming to our harbors and more and more sailing boat and cruises and this maritime if they learn this skill and this trade they definitely have a place sustain a good job i also support bill 350172 building codes is very essential sometimes i if i'm but about it because sometimes it's very difficult and it's a costly endeavor to build but if we don't start building strong and more resilient every time a storm come we stand to run into some situation with our homes and losing our properties bill number 350182 that's um an act amending title 14 virgin Code Chapter 51 by designating the existing provision of Subchapter 1 and adding Subchapter 2 relating to non-consensual dissemination of sexual explicit image is plain and simple. Your tech picture with somebody and you start sharing it around, it's going to cost you dearly, especially if you don't have consent. This bill really doesn't address minors. actually come in the District Court of the Virgin Islands when it comes to child pornography but for adult this bill definitely addresses these matter people pay attention because you could become a victim of this pornography you can also become the victim of going to jail for sharing pornography that was not approved by the other person the appropriate time I will vote in on all these measures thank you very much madam chair thank you senator Johnson

3 : 46 : 46 senator Potter you may proceed with three minutes thank you madam chair madam chair colleagues I rise in support of all four bills in this final block and I want to commend the sponsors of each of these pieces of legislation bill number 35.0133 really speaks to the issue of a marine industry. And without question, the marine industry is dominated by persons who are not local. We must find ways to incentivize young people to become involved and engaged in the marine industry and providing these educational scholarship opportunities is a first step. I think prior to that we need to provide them with knowledge of an exposure to career opportunities and the fact that they pay well in the marine industry like harbor pilots and some of these positions that pay substantial salaries so giving them the scholarship opportunities as well as educating them as to the opportunities in the marine field i think is a step in the right direction with regards to bill number 35-0172. Also, this is an initiative that improves and strengthens our billing codes and puts them in line with nationally recognized standards. We received input from the commissioner of DPNR, Commissioner JP Oriel. There was no opposition whatsoever. I think it's a step in the right direction for us. With regards to Bill 35.0182, this is really an important piece of legislation that aims to detour individuals from sharing private images without the consent. you know, it is also an opportunity for us to really hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. So this is definitely timely. At the appropriate time, I absolutely plan to vote affirmatively for that piece of legislation. And finally, Bill 35.0182, which makes revisions to the unemployment benefit laws in our territory by removing what was unintended unintended rather incentives for persons to remain on the unemployment rules beyond the time that they should be there irrespective of opportunities there in the world of work and so this is good it provides us with the opportunity to provide incentives for persons to get off the unemployment rolls and have it utilized by persons who are absolutely in need so madam chair at the

3 : 50 : 20 appropriate time i will vote in the affirmative for all bills in this final block thank you very much thank you senator potter senator francis you may proceed three minutes thank you very much madam chair as you know i'm not a member of this committee but certainly at the appropriate time we'll be in full support of all of these measures and i'd like to take this opportunity to commend um all of the bill sponsors in block number three and uh Obviously, when you talk about

educational scholarship in the marine industry, this is very much consistent with our efforts to really maximize our blue economy. You know, there's a lot involved in our blue economy when we talk about transshipment, the development of the social enterprise zone. You know, we just had where we have Virgin Islanders that are responsible via the pilot boats to bring in these mega cruise ships into our port.

3:51:24 And it's really important for us to be able to foster that next level of leadership as it pertains to the marine industry. Not to mention, it's a very good paying job. You know, so there's many opportunities there for young people. And, you know, put our money where our mouth is. is to continue to invest in our young people and give them that educational scholarship opportunities. Bill number 35.0172, which speaks to our building code. This has been a work in progress with the DPNR, where we're trying to, again, update our Virgin Islands Code as it pertains to building codes. It's antiquated. We have talked about the comprehensive land and water use plan. But nonetheless, there is an opportunity to be able to address some of those issues as it pertains to a bill in court and to be able to empower DPNR to effectuate and approve certain requests and permits that have come into them and hopefully minimize the involvement of the legislature in being able to address some of those requests. Bill number 35.0182 which speaks to the non-consensual dissemination of sexual explicit images.

3:52:37 We talk about, again, cybercrime and these type of issues, I think it is so important that we're able to address this. We have situations where individuals, because of whatever may have transpired in a relationship, that they try to, again, seek retaliation by the exposure and dissemination of sexual that seeks to jeopardize and create a victim and continue to victimize those individuals because of whatever breakup. She done you, move on. You know what I mean? Stop trying to prolong this issue, and there's many fishing upon.

3:53:22 You know, get a new one, but you can't allow for you to try to destroy a person's reputation because there was a breakup. Bill number 35.0218, a measure that has been worked on by the Department of Labor and the administration in respect to maximizing our ability to get people back into the workforce. And the important thing about this bill is that while they seek to reduce the number of weeks of benefits, your time and benefits, none of your benefit reduction is done. So you get the same amount of money and a shorter period of time. and hopefully get you back into the workforce. We know what we're experiencing here in the territory where there's conversation about people coming in to eat our food as a result of individuals not being able to hire people. We're talking about burgers, people that work in a restaurant, all gamut of our workforce now is being challenged by not having adequate and sufficient people in our workforce. So again, I ask for my colleagues' support in this measure to allow for individuals to get back into the workforce in a timely fashion. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, for the time. And I hope that my colleagues will definitely move all of these measures forward because it's important that we continue to do the work on behalf of the people at the Virgin Islands. Thank you.

3:54:50 Thank you, Senator Francis. Senator Gittins, you may proceed. Three minutes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair and colleagues, I am poised to support all four of these measures before us. I wouldn't speak on all, but I would like to speak to the first bill, number 0133, regarding the scholarship to establish an education scholarship program to support individuals interested in pursuing a career in the maritime industry. I often look at this, especially traversing between St. Thomas and St. John, and saying how our young people need to take more advantage of this. But I look at this industry beyond the Virgin Islands and even beyond the Caribbean, as this is a vital component of the global transportation network. The industry acts as a bedrock as it brings together all parties involved in the international supply chain. So this goes to our economy as well. We saw where a ketition sailed the largest cruise ship into some of these ports and whatnot, and we saw how proud the ketitions were. And this is exactly what we're trying to do here to provide that opportunity for our young people here in the Virgin Islands. Also regarding Bill number 0182 relating to the non-consensual dissemination of sexually explicit images. I encourage, just like I did in the Committee of Jurisdiction, we had an extensive conversation on this. and again i want to encourage all everyone young old in between to please be mindful but especially young people one minute i say like one of our virgin islanders uh has coined mine keep those photos to yourself if they want to see you they will see you when you get home

3:57:14 Be careful in sharing images that months later, weeks later, days later, or hours later, you might be sorry for. So, again, I caution everyone in the exchange of these types of photos via these things where we so can't leave alone. Madam Chair thank you at the appropriate time I am poised to support all four of these measures thank you thank you Senator Gittins at this time before I entertain Senator Bulquez I would just like to say myself that I am in support of these measures before us I just want to particularly talk about bill number 35-0133 this is very important to the virgin islands as we are surrounded by water as we traverse on the boats into islands that we need to educate our youths in pursuing careers in maritime industry from excuse me from maintaining them to to driving them they need to to be involved in this industry and i'm an avid swimmer and to learn to swim a lot of virgin islanders don't know how to swim um and i would be in full support of this measure senator gittins i just ought to let you know i was offered a job in this scene in the virgin islands

police department in the marine unit I won't tell you that story but after that I've been calling they've been telling me to they want to hire me so that's a rescue story so at this time I'll entertain Senator Angel Bocas you may proceed three minutes

- 3:59:21 All right. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I introduced Bill No. 35-0133 previously and also Bill No. 35-0182, so hence I'm in support of both measures. As for Bill No. 35-0172, which represents a crucial step towards modernizing our building codes to reflect nationally recognized standards and ensuring the safety and sustainability and the resiliency of our infrastructure when it comes to our building codes it protects us in the long run in this ever-changing and challenging world as for bill number 35-0218 it modernizes our unemployment benefits system ensuring that it is sustainable fair and responsive to economic realities as we know how our economy changed and changes and fluctuates we also have to be assured that our unemployment benefits are able to keep up with the new norm so these reforms are crucial in maintaining a safety net for our workers while promoting fiscal responsibility and employer account accountability madam chair I rise in support of both those measures and all the measures in this block and look forward to voting at the appropriate time thank you thank you do i hear a motion thank you senator bolquez do i hear a motion yes motion motion motion senator angel bolquez thank you madam chair madam chair i move amendment number three five dash six six eight amendment in the nature of a substitute to bill number three 35-0133 offered by Senator Anghel Bulkesh, Jr.
- 4:01:13 Bill number 35-0133 is amended by striking the language after the enactment clause and inserting new language to read as follows. Section one, Title 17, Virgin Islands Code, chapter 15 is amended by adding a section 190 GG to read, section 190 GG, the Virgin Islands Maritime Industry educational scholarship a the Virgin Islands maritime industry educational scholarship is established and administered by the Virgin Islands Board of Education to provide support to individuals interested in pursuing a career in a maritime in the ocean senator Johnson amendment number 35668 to bill number 350133 I so move motion made by senator Johnson seconded by senator Carla Joseph and senator Gittins hearing no objection so ordered motion motion senator Angel Bocas thank you madam chair madam chair I move bill number three five dash zero one eight two as amended in the nature of a substitute I apologize I apologize let me retract I withdraw start over thank you madam chair madam chair I move that bill number three five dash zero one 3 3 as amended in the nature of a substitute be favorably voted upon in this committee and reported out to the full body for further action and consideration I withdraw again madam chair I so move to the previous motion I'm an amendment motion I so move properly moved by senator angel book is second date by senator carler Joseph hearing no objection so ordered motion motion senator book is thank you madam
- 4:03:28 chair madam chair I move bill number three five dash zero one three three as amended an act amending title 17 Virgin Islands code chapter 15 relating to the scholarships by adding section one nine zero GG to establish an educational scholarship program to support individuals interested in pursuing a career in the maritime industry in the Virgin Islands I so move motion Unproperly made by Senator Angel Borges and seconded by Senator Carla Joseph, Senator Gittins and Johnson, roll call on Bill Number 0133 as amended. Senator Angel L. Borges, Jr.
- 4:04:19 Yes. Senator Borges, Jr., yea. Senator Diane T. Capehart. Yes. Senator Capehart, yea. Senator Kenneth L. Gittins? Yes. Senator Gittins, yay. Senator Maurice C. James? Senator James, absent. Senator Franklin D. Johnson? Yes. Senator Johnson, yay. Senator Carla J. Joseph? Yes. Senator Joseph, yay. Senator Milton E. Potter? Yes.
- 4:04:46 Senator Potter, yay. Madam Chair, you have six yays, one absent. Thank you, Madam Clerk. Bill number 35-0133, as amended, an act amending Title 17, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 15, relating to scholarships by adding Section 190 GG to establish an educational scholarship program to support individuals interested in pursuing a career in maritime industry in the Virgin Islands, has been voted upon favorably by this committee on rules and judiciary and will be reported out of this committee to the full body for full consideration motion senator bolquez thank you madam chair madam chair I move bill number three five dash zero one seven two an act amending title 29 chapter 5 Virgin Islands code relating to building codes to provide for adoption of national rec nationally recognized consensus based codes and standards and amendments to such codes that are in the best interest of the territory and to provide for clarification to the Virgin Islands building code be favorably voted upon in this committee and reported out to the full body for further action and consideration I so move motion properly made by senator Bokins and seconded by senator Carla Joseph roll call and bill number 35-0172.
- 4:06:22 Senator Angel L. Borges, Jr. Senator Borges, Jr., yay? Senator Diane T. Capehart? Yes. Senator Capehart, yay? Senator Kenneth L. Gittins? Senator Gittins, yay? Senator Maurice C. James? Senator James, absent? Senator Franklin D. Johnson? Senator Johnson, yay? Senator Carla J. Joseph? Senator Joseph, yay? Senator Milton E. Potter? Yeah. Senator Potter, yay. Madam Chair, you have six yays, one absent. Thank you, Madam Chair.

- 4:06:59 Madam Clerk, Bill Number 35-01-72, an act amending Title 29, Chapter 5, Virgin Islands Code relating to the building codes to provide for adoption of nationally recognized consensus-based codes and standards and amendments to such codes that are in the best interest of the territory and to provide the four clarifications to the Virgin Islands Building Code has been voted upon favorably by the Committee on Rules and Judiciary and will be reported out of this committee to the full body for full consideration. The committee will take a two-minute recess.
- 4:08:11 Thank you. We'll be right back. The Committee of Rules and Judiciary is out of recess. [3 such phrases repeated 8 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 4:11:59 Do I hear a motion? Motion, Senator Gittins. Thank you. Good afternoon again, Chair and colleagues. that Bill number 35, that's 0182, an act amending Title 14 of the Virgin Islands Co Chapter 5-1 by designating the existing provisions as Subchapter 1 and adding a Subchapter 2 relating to the non-consensual dissemination of sexually explicit images be voted upon favorably here in this committee and be forwarded to the full body for further consideration. I so move.
- 4:12:39 Motion properly made by Senator Gittins and seconded by Senator Carla Joseph, Senator Johnson, Senator Buelquez. May I have a roll call on Bill No. 35-0182. Senator Angel L. Buelquez, Jr. Yes. Senator Buelquez, Jr., yes. Senator Diane T. K. Part. Yes. Senator K. Part, yes. Senator Kenneth L. Gittins. Yes.
- 4:13:09 Yes. Senator Gatins, yay. Yes. Senator Maurice C. James. Senator James, absent. Senator Franklin D. Johnson. Yay. Senator Johnson, yay. Senator Carla J. Joseph. Yes. Senator Joseph, yay. Senator Milton E. Potter. Yes. Senator Potter, yay. Madam Chair, you have six yays, one absent. Thank you, Madam Clerk. bill number 35-0182 an act amending title 14 of the virgin islands code chapter 51 by designating the existing provisions as sub chapter one and adding a sub chapter two relating to the non consensual dissemination of sexually explicit images has been voted upon this committee favorably by the Committee on Rules and Judiciary and will be reported out to the full body for full consideration. Do I hear a motion? Motion. Motion Senator Carla Joseph. Thank you so much Madam Chair. Madam Chair and colleagues I move that bill number 35-0218 an act amending Title 24 Virgin Islands Code chapter 12 relating to unemployment benefits by reducing the number of weeks that unemployment benefits can be received, increasing the statute of limitations for the collection of overpayments of unemployment benefits from claimants and for delinquent employer contribution, allowing for the implementation of the payroll variation methodology launch in the calendar year beginning January 2024, implementing a 10-year record retention period for employers, and requiring employers to register with the Virgin Islands State Information Data Exchange System be favorably voted upon in this committee and forwarded to the full body for further action and consideration. I so move.
- 4:15:26 Motion properly made by Senator Carla Joseph and seconded by Senator Bolkis and Senator Johnson may I have roll call on bill number 35-0218 Senator Angel L. Bolkis Jr. Senator Bolkis Jr. Senator Diane T. Capehart yes Senator Capehart yay Senator Kenneth L. gittins senator gittins yay senator maurice c james senator james absent senator franklin d johnson senator johnson yay senator kala j joseph senator joseph yay senator milton e potter you senator potter yay yes madam chair you have six yeas one absent thank you madam clerk bill number 35-0218 an act amending title 24 virgin islands code chapter 12 relating to unemployment benefits by reducing the number of weeks that unemployment benefits can be received increasing the statute of limitations for the collection of overpayments of unemployment benefits from claimants and for delinquent employer contribution allowing for the implementation of the payroll variation methodology launch in the calendar year beginning January 2024 implementing a 10-year record retention period for employers and requiring employers to register with the Virgin Islands state information data exchange system system has been voted upon favorably by the committee on rules and judiciary and will be reported out of this committee to the full body for further consideration
- 4:17:24 colleagues we have concluded block three and i just want to say thank you to my staff thank you to the legislative staff to legal staff to my colleagues for this participating in this rules meeting today i just want to say god bless you and god bless the people of the virgin islands meeting is adjourned praise the lord i agree 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.

26x **Senator Kenneth L. Gittens**
heard in this transcript as: Gittins, Kenneth Gittins, Kenneth L. Gittins

25x	Senator Carla Joseph the surname alone also matches: Clifford Joseph; Karla J. Joseph heard in this transcript as: Carla J. Joseph, Joseph
20x	Senator Franklin D. Johnson heard in this transcript as: Franklin Johnson, Johnson
19x	Senator Marise C. James the surname alone also matches: Javan James; Giovanni James Sr heard in this transcript as: James, Maryse C. James, Maurice C. James, Maurice James
18x	Senator Milton E. Potter heard in this transcript as: Potter
16x	Senator Diane T. Capeheart heard in this transcript as: Capehart, Diane T. Capehart
12x	Senator Angel L. Borges Jr heard in this transcript as: Angel Borges, Angel L. Borges Jr., Borges Jr, Borges Jr.
9x	Senator Novelle Francis heard in this transcript as: Francis, Novell E. Francis, Novell E. Francis Jr, Novell E. Francis Jr., Novelli Francis, Novelli Francis Jr.
8x	Senator Angel L. Bolques, Jr. heard in this transcript as: Angel L. Bolques Jr., Angel L. Bolquez Jr., Bolquez, Bulquez
6x	Senator Angel L. Bocas Jr heard in this transcript as: Angel Bocas, Bocas Jr
4x	Senator Angel L. Bolkis Jr heard in this transcript as: Bolkis, Bolkis Jr
4x	Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory heard in this transcript as: Donna A. Fred Gregory, Donna Fred Gregory
3x	Senator Angel L. Bokes Jr heard in this transcript as: Angel L. Bowkes Jr, Bowkes Jr
3x	Senator Angel L. Bulkes Jr heard in this transcript as: Anghel Bulkesh Jr., Boulkes
3x	Senator Diane T. K. Park heard in this transcript as: Diane T. K. Part, Dianne T. K. Part
3x	Senator Kaye Part heard in this transcript as: K. Part
2x	Governor Albert Bryan Jr heard in this transcript as: Albert Bryan
2x	Senator Kurt A. heard in this transcript as: Kenneth L.
2x	Senator Ray Fonseca
1x	Senator Donna Frett-Gregory heard in this transcript as: Donna A. Frett-Gregory

Bills and acts referred to

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

Referred to but not found in our acts corpus: Bill 35-0077, Bill 35-0211, Bill 35-0133, Bill 35-0182, Bill 35-0218, Bill 35-0225, Bill 35-0172