



Oath of Office Ceremony

Legislature USVI

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0:00:00 like 10 years older than me so I was telling Maurice during the campaign I say hey well me here and Bulkens and I say it's so funny to see how much about our men they get sick so I said we're telling the two of them you know I tell most of my friends who are 10 years older than me that personally when you were running three girls you're gonna tell me you're gonna handle three girls now you reach to the point where you're slowing down in front the toilet you never reach out and tell me Clif be ready for this portion of your life in so I'm just saying we we're making joke but this is this is serious business by just saying for myself I again I can thank my mom because from 35 she were encouraging me to get there she had a lot of friends she lost and that's what we were supposed to be doing when we lose somebody we we ain't supposed to walk the same road again we're supposed to encourage somebody else in this life to do the right thing and that's portion of me making up my mind to run here you know I have spoke to mr. Uzi Richards encouragement Freddie Joseph Pam Cologne you name it I spoke to a lot of the problems that we have been in the Virgin Islands and all of those were encouragement of course my wife for sure I had to go home and ask hey what do you think about me running one minute no because this is it but anyway we're here to thank folks here today and I want to thank my wife I want to thank my mother who's not here and I know she's watching the TV where she's sitting right now I want to thank mr. Alfonso James he's here today looking out on that side I'm gonna look behind me I want to thank my sons this is Clifford Junior Christopher Joseph as well and I want to thank my sister and my brother because I was a little brother but now I'm the big brother when I said big not in age but in size you know and if I did the reverse my father started off with a Christopher then a

0:02:01 Clifford I reverse I went with a Clifford and you see with the same thing look at Christopher he was a little brother now he is the big brother all right good so but overall I really want to thank the folks on St. Croix because you made it happen time even to the okay mr. president thank you mr. president you made it happen I asked for your support and the support was overwhelming I got my scrolling from the night one at my opening I looking at Choke Knight and others that were there to tell me all my mishap from you know all these so today I'm here comfortable willing to speak because I'm willing

to help again restore these islands to what we knew and looking for greater things in the future in the violinist because we have some work cut out for all of us again thank everybody who made it here today and I'm gonna thank my committee and thank everybody who donated their time and encouraged somebody else I ain't just the folks that I know vote for me some folks reach out to others because I since I've won I have I've met so much more new people that tell me I don't know you know but they could tell me who told them or encourage use a good man we want good people in the Senate so I'm here to solve committed to solve was my logo and I can stay committed to solve the people of the boys now Clifford Joseph is not in need of nothing so there's no reason for me to go wayward other than finding ways to help solve our problems well said well said Senator Clifford Joseph senator Clifford Joseph will be chairing the committee on

0:04:07

homeland security justice and public safety and I had the opportunity and the privilege to work in the the same cabinet the map part of cabinet with Senator Joseph when he served as the fire chief fire direct give me your emotion I apologize as the fire director and he definitely garnered a reputation as being a hard-working committed leader so we look forward to working closely with you in the 36th legislature Senator yes thank you so kindly Mr. President and I'd like to say thank you to the members of the 35th legislature I saw Senator Kerry Young earlier of course Senator Capehart also Senator Javon James Senior and of course Donna Fred Gregory who who have learned a lot from Donna Fred Gregory and also the president Mr. Francis Senator Francis I got to get accustomed but I want to thank to give special thanks to Miss Wade Miss Oliver Wade Owens now I got to say Owens now because she's Owen Wade now and also to Sandra Hopson Sandra Soberanis Hopson and also to Beverly Samuel right here Beverly Samuel those folks are behind me of course my cousin Jackie Freeman and my son Mario who is taking the pictures you know you start out with a blank envelope so for the 36th legislature I am putting two things in my envelope from today and I also want to finish I want to thank the 35th legislature because when I took office we had about 219 diabetes patients and we could only treat about 122 and with the help of the 35th legislature we were able to and with the 35th legislature we were able to appropriate more than 4 million dollars to add additional chairs in the Wang Louie and the Roy Lester Snyder Hospital no reverse osmosis filtration system etc but there's one other thing that's left and we need to get 1.5 million dollars so that we can continue to have the diabetes clinic the Vidcore clinic that has now opened in the Roy Lester Snyder Hospital on the fifth floor because you know diabetes If I was to ask you for a show of hands of the people in this room that are diabetic or pre-diabetic One minute

0:06:46

At least 25% would raise their hands So it's very important we got to take care of it but I'm also want to add two other things because you know cancer there's about 500 Virgin Islanders receive a cancer diagnosis every year and we're building the Charlotte Kinamon Cancer Center and it's going to be equipped with a state of the art CT stimulation CT simulator and a linear accelerator but we also need to have a radiation oncologist on board it's going to cost about 500,000 hours and a pathologist the same thing one Louis modular unit I'm asking the governor to declare a health hospital state of emergency I spoke to him I mentioned it to my colleagues I mentioned it to the chief of staff you see the one Louis modular units have a lifespan of five to seven years depending on how you look at the time we are in year six we are in year six we are not going to be able to occupy the one Louis new hospital in three years so we need to get a state of emergency right now so that we can get procured and built the new one Louis hospital also the Roy Lester Snyder and also the Charlotte Kinamon Clinic because you know we have about 15 billion dollars in federal disaster money to spend and if you look at it 15 billion if you spend a billion every year is going to take you 15 years if you spend 500 million every year it's going to take you 15 years if you spend 500 million every year it's going to take you 15 years if you spend 500 million every year it's going to take you 15 years if you spend 500 million every year it's going to take you 15 years if you spend 500 million every year it's going to take you 15 years if you spend 500 million every year it's going to take you 15 years if you spend 500 million every year it's going to take you 30 years if you spend 50 years if you spend 150 million every year it's going to take you 30 years if you spend 250 million every year we are spending that 250 million every year the federal government is not going to let us keep that money for 60 years we need a speed of emergency and we have to speed up get our health and hospitals in order thank you mr. president for the time thank you very much thank you very much Senator Ray Fonseca Senator Fonseca did an excellent job chairing the committee and health hospitals and human services last go round and he will be chairing the same committee this go round he always brings a little sense of humor to the body which we often need a little bit of levity from time to time but Senator Fonseca I sincerely look forward to working with you closely mostly in the 36th legislature I failed to say to chair the committee that Senator Carla Joseph will be chairing right Senator Carla Joseph will be chairing the committee on rules and Judiciary I know she's a stickler for details so after this if I didn't say this she would have been telling me Santa Pata so I clear the air with that one Senator Maurice James you're

0:09:56

recognized for your three minutes thank you Mr. President good afternoon Virgin Islanders near and far I stand here today with gratitude and humility and deep gratitude more than ever for my family because the Virgin Islands is a small place that we brag about a lot but there is no place too small for for evil to exist for evil to exist and so evil tried to invade

my family last year evil that came from people who I do not know my husband doesn't know my daughters don't know and my son doesn't know and have never had a conversation with and so sometimes when we have situations like this in life and in my life I look for mentors and my mentors could can be anybody could be a bumper sticker and a car quite frankly but there's one Maya Angelou who I read a lot and I want to say this from her well-known poem did you want to see me broken bowed head and lowered eyes shoulders falling down like teardrops we can buy soap my soulful cries you may shoot me with your words you may cut me with your eyes you may kill me with your hatefulness you may kill me with your hatefulness but still like air I rise I couldn't rise without my faith in God because from him all good things come another one that I focus on a lot I play Bob Marley a lot and Bob Marley in his second track on his album that's the most famous album exodus says I and I know come to fight flesh and blood one spirit and spiritual wickedness in high and low places so while they fight you down stand firm and give

0:12:02 thanks and praises and that's what I did in 2024 so I want to say to my son who is going through and facing trials in California right now you have been a source of strength and encouragement to me and from a distance you have reminded me to ignore the noise and distractions around me to my daughters my fearless and extraordinary daughters 30 seconds your grace and grit have been nothing short of inspiring you have held your heads high and face each moment with courage to my husband Anthony Paul quiet Pablo right here my steadfast partner in life thank you this journey has not been easy and yet through every challenge you have shown remarkable strength when our family face your unwavering support and justice and just attacks you exercise restraint and dignity set an example of unshakable resolve your wave unwavering support has been my anchor and I am forever grateful time I just want to wrap up I did not achieve all that I would have liked to in my first term it was short and had a lot of obstacles but I did not accomplish what I had done without my staff thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you for the jingle my friends who are here today Geraldine Vivalen and Don Bruce and all my supporters thank you thank you thank you thank you Laureen Williams you helped me Jeanette Guzman there's so many people the Virgin Islands National Guard I would not be here without you retired and active people those inside and outside all the people congratulations colleagues it did not escape me and should not escape you that 49% of voters did not come out and vote for any one of us 49% think about that so we must rebuild the trust of our people in government so we must rebuild the trust of our people in government Virgin Islanders I am here to fight for you from the bottom of my heart from the bottom of my heart thank you for giving me the honor and privilege to serve you and I just gonna wrap up by saying this I wrote a lot didn't know we had three minutes but I need to say I do need to say this though I really need to say it if you went and you watched the movie Wicked

0:14:39 all right all right you find out that the wizard Virgin Islands people there is no wizard that will save you you already possess what you think you lack you find out that the wizard is a weak man gaslighting an entire land you just stop that stop gaslighting our people and as you know from my first term in the words of Alfalfa and if Alfalfa and if I am flying solo at least I'm flying free to those who ground me take a message back from me tell them how I am defying gravity I'm flying high defying gravity nobody in all of us the Virgin Islands no wizard that there is or was is ever going to bring me down so thank you Virgin Islands I am here for you thank you very much Senator Maurice James but while they fight you down stand firm and give joy thanks and praises Senator Maurice James and I share a couple things in common we actually share the same birthday November the same birthday November 22nd and we both share a love for Bob Molly Senator James the very thoughtful leader I sincerely look forward to working with you in the 36th legislature we were neighbors in the 35th so I miss you but hey it's all good Senator and I'm also Senator Boy Blue.

0:16:36 Senator Marvin Blaine, you're recognized for your three minutes. Thank you so much, Mr. President. Good afternoon, everyone. Because I feel good today. Dear the day of the Lord that made to let us rejoice and be glad in it. I'm also first want to start by thanking God for all of his blessings that he's bestowed upon my life thus far for having me being re-elected six consecutive terms in the St. Thomas-St. Dan district. I want to really turn the people of this district for their support, their criticism, their love, their prayers. It's truly humbling to me.

0:17:16 I must say I also want to thank my family, starting with my beautiful wife, Jacqueline Blaine. Thank you for your support. My biggest critic and supporter, Fierce. My son, Khalid Blaine, Karim, Latisha. Thank you for your love and support. My chief of staff, Ms. Shinneri, Mr. Krega, my advisor, and chief researcher, Ms. Ortiz, Ms. Daniel, and many of my campaign workers.

0:17:52 Thank you for your support and your hard work. And most importantly, the people of the Virgin Islands, the St. Thomas-St. John's district, for having a confidence and faith in me once again to serve on your behalf. This job is not easy, despite what you may have heard. Why I say that? You don't have a life. You really don't. But it's a sacrifice, and we are public servants. We know what we sign up for. We know what we sign up for. Many times, many times, I get complaints from my wife all the time, really. You know, in terms of our next meeting, you know I sign up first, so stop

balling. It is what it is. One minute. It is what it is. You know what I'm saying? I keep it real. I keep it real. But she understands, and she respects, you know, she respects my position.

0:18:53 As I said, though, this term, in the 36th legislature of the Virgin Islands, we have some work to do, you know, colleagues. And it's about the quality of life for our people and the low-hanging fruits. We had the conversation for the past couple weeks in terms of the salary, \$10,000 salary increase. 30 seconds. Everybody going crazy. There are others getting 40. Commissioners getting 130 and up. No complaint. No complaint. I honestly personally feel as hard as I work and volunteer and give back on a daily basis for years, I feel a way. I feel a way. You know I feel a way? I never asked for a raise. None of us asked for a raise. None of us. None of us asked for a raise.

0:19:42 Time. Why glad the conversation came because it really showed me what many people feel about and think about us. It is what it is and I understand and respect the positions but at the same time, I'm going to continue to stay on the ground and work hard and go above and beyond and give 100% of my time because you're my bosses. I understand my role. But it really opened my eyes. To be honest with you, it opened my eyes. I feel a way. I feel a way.

0:20:09 I never asked for anything. I always give him back 24-7. That's what I do. That's who I am. I'm a public servant first. I'm not a politician. I'm a public servant first. I'm just a senator which involves politics but I don't play politics. I don't do politics. I'm a public servant and I need to make that clear to everyone. You understand? I need to make that clear. You can't go to like this. When I think happened, I went out for spite because I really wanted to see the reaction of people and it really hurt me in some ways. I went out for spite. I'm a man outside. I stay outside. You understand? But at the same time, I understand that position because I'm the right.

0:20:51 Many times, the quality of life needs to be improved in the Virgin Islands. We need a better quality of life for our people. And I'm going to focus all my energy and efforts in the 36. I'm not an officer so I have more time on my hand. So I'm going to be outside doing what I ought to do to improve the quality of life and the low-hanging fruit so we can really attack right away because it's important. As my colleague said, only 49% of people vote in this district. Many people didn't vote for us. You saw it today in the garden and in St. John. No one came out. I understand what they're going through and how they feel.

0:21:25 I'm out there every day and they're cussing you every day. They're cussing you every day what ain't right. Even though you do a lot of things that's right and that's good, but they don't want to hear about that. Everything is wrong. There's a lot of problems in every place else. Everybody has to share problems, but guess what? We're doing what we can to fix them. Once in a while, I say, man, I appreciate what you're doing. All day, you're off the licks. No, I need to stop it. I need to stop it. For real. Licks, licks, licks. For what? We live in this community too. We live here too. We understand the problems too. We're going through the same thing like you. We are a family. We go through the same thing on a daily basis. So we understand your plight. Because guess what? I am you and you are me. So what? We're in the same boat. Let's work together.

0:22:15 Give me a little support now and then, man. Stop it. Stop it. Stop it. Again, I don't want to view the time, Mr. President, but I want to thank my colleagues for their continued support. I want to thank the central staff for all they do because they really, really got our backs and they really need more recognition many times because they are the ones behind the scenes doing all the hard work. I feel much lighter now. Like I said, I don't have, I'm not an officer in this term, but trust me, I go see and hear from Boy Blue. Remember that. Thank you. Thank you.

0:22:56 Thank you. Thank you so very much, Senator Blyden. Thank you very much. I agree with you, Senator Blyden. Don't believe everything you read or everything you hear about the job of a senator. It is really a tough job. If you really want to do a good job and make a difference, it is a tough, tough job. A quick, and Senator Veilin mentioned it yesterday, a quick trip to the store to pick up a box of milk will turn in and often does to a two-hour trip and you really can't leave because if you leave, I can't believe I voted for you and my mother voted for you and you can't talk to me. So it is tough. It is tough, but that is, as my wife likes to tell me, this is something that you decide to do. Nobody force you to do it. You know? So it's a passion that we have for public service and to making a difference. You know, it's...

0:24:03 Exactly. So I want to say that Senator Blyden will be chairing the committee on housing, transportation, and telecommunication. He has a passion, we all know, for housing. Senator Blyden is a passionate worker. He has a tireless work ethic. I don't know how he does it because Senator Blyden will be to every event and activity on this island. Every family. Every place. Three of them on a day. You know? That's the reputation that he has garnered here in the territory. So I look forward, Senator Blyden, to working with you closely in the 36th legislature. Congratulations on your victory. Senator Kurt Veilley, you're recognized for your three minutes. Senator Kurt Veilley: Thank you, Mr. President. Senator Blyden did a good job. Senator Kurt Veilley: He spoke a lot of raw truth and a lot that individuals at times are silent to say because of political repercussions. So I pat you on your back for your bravery.

- 0:25:21 Senator Kurt Veilley: Today, and as majority leader, we literally agree with you, but if you're getting some more licks, you're going to get a man that's going to run from agreeing with you, just letting you know that's how it happened. Senator Kurt Veilley: Cliff, before I start, even people that didn't vote for you or are not registered say they vote for you now. Senator Kurt Veilley: Okay? Senator Kurt Veilley: You're a winner. Senator Kurt Veilley: So just remember that. Senator Kurt Veilley: Can I check some? Senator Kurt Veilley: Bell, I vote for you. Senator Kurt Veilley: They're not even registered. Senator Kurt Veilley: So I always remember that. Senator Kurt Veilley: A lot goes on when you're in this office. Senator Kurt Veilley: People ain't talked to you for years talking to you now, Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling.
- 0:26:02 Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 32 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:26:31 Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 38 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:27:19 Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 18 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:27:47 Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 18 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:28:15 Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 31 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:29:06 Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 32 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:29:48 Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 23 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:30:21 Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 17 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:30:48 Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 19 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:31:17 Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 19 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:31:46 Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 30 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:32:36 Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 27 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:33:13 Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 20 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:33:43 Senator Kurt Veilley: Smiling. Senator Veilley: Smiling. [2 such phrases repeated 19 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:34:12 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 23 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:34:43 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 20 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:35:11 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 33 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:35:52 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 23 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:36:23 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 19 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:36:50 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 22 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

0:37:20 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 39 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

0:38:07 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 29 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

0:38:52 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 21 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

0:39:21 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 25 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

0:39:54 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 28 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

0:40:30 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 30 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

0:41:08 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 21 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

0:41:37 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 18 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

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0:56:58 Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 27 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

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1:06:21	Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 22 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
1:06:51	Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 19 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
1:07:18	Senator Veilley: Smiling. [1 such phrases repeated 24 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
1:07:50	Senator Veilley: Smiling. We'll be right back. [2 such phrases repeated 67 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

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.

90x	Senator Kurt Veilley heard in this transcript as: Veilley
8x	Senator Marvin Blyden heard in this transcript as: Blyden
5x	Senator Marise C. James the surname alone also matches: Javan James; Giovanni James Sr heard in this transcript as: James, Maurice James
4x	Senator Carla Joseph the surname alone also matches: Clifford Joseph; Karla J. Joseph heard in this transcript as: Joseph
4x	Senator Ray Fonseca heard in this transcript as: Fonseca
2x	Senator Clifford Joseph
2x	Senator Diane T. Capeheart heard in this transcript as: Capehart
2x	Senator Javon E. James Senior heard in this transcript as: Javon James Senior
2x	Senator Kerry Young
2x	Senator Novelle Francis heard in this transcript as: Francis