



Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection

Legislature USVI

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- 0:00:00 use the procurement and disposal laws utilized by all other executive branch agencies, then requiring the lottery to go through the Department of Property and Procurement for all its procurement needs. The AG's opinion rested on the argument that, as written, the language established in the Virgin Islands lottery was either missing or included language in certain sections of the enabling statute that did not clearly establish its autonomy. The AG argued that the lottery qualifies as an executive branch instrumentality based on the language contained in 32 VIC, subsections 243 and 248.
- 0:01:00 In support of that position, the Attorney General noted that the legislature, one, did not include language designating the lottery as independent or granted the express authority to sue and or be sued. Number two, vested the governor with absolute veto authority over lottery decisions. Number three, did not exempt the Virgin Islands lottery from the central government's procurement laws or authorize it to establish its own independent procurement procedures.
- 0:01:43 This bill addresses and attempts to correct those shortcomings, reaffirming and restoring the autonomy the Virgin Islands lottery was originally intended to possess. We present before you today several reasons besides those I mentioned. From its inception, it should have been legislated to be an autonomous agency. Based on the type of enterprise the lottery operates, the requirement to utilize the Department of Property and Procurement's lengthy process as a newly added responsibility to them, as well, makes it almost impossible to operate. The lottery must be able to operate on an expeditious basis.
- 0:02:39 We operate this entity similarly to other autonomous agencies in the Virgin Islands government. WAPA, Waste Management Authority, the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority, and the Port Authority, just to name a few. What sets us apart from these agencies is that we do not depend on the central government for any funding, nor do we receive any federal funding for our operation. The VIL has been effectively governed by the Commission for its entire existence.

0:03:24 Removing the governor's absolute veto does not remove the reporting requirement to the legislature and the governor pursuant to Section 246 of Chapter 13. Our objective, our objective, as it is with other autonomous agencies, is to manage procurement based on applicable laws through a structured process that promotes accountability, equity, and efficiency. Once proper autonomy is restored, we will be in a better position to enhance performance and operational efficiency, positioning the organization to compete more effectively and generate greater revenues for the U.S. Virgin Islands. Senators, we have begun the work of planning our path forward.

0:04:22 But we ask you to amend the code to restore our autonomy, enabling us to become even more efficient and stronger to carry the territory forward in its rapidly growing industry. This concludes my testimony, and we await questions that you may have. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Executive Director Williams, for your testimony on Bill No. 36-0233.

0:04:55 At this time, I'll open up the floor for a three-minute round. Before I do that, though, I just wanted to ask you, Executive Director, how do you believe that this will change any operations of the Virgin Islands Lottery? This will make you more efficient, more effective? What do you-what say you about that? You are mute. Sorry about that.

0:05:28 Yes, yes, it absolutely will. And I'll use one example. A part of the responsibility to utilize the Department of Property and Procurement to execute contracts, for example, we have two attorneys and retainer. Because of the bureaucracy and the processes at DPP, and that's not a big to them, it's just a fact, our attorneys were not able to have contracts executed in one instance for almost two years. For the lottery to continue to be run like an enterprise and compete in this community and outside of this community, exigency is always a must. You know, we can't wait for months at a time to execute contracts for marketing, for example, cleaning. I mean, we have a series of contracts that must go through DPP, and I want to put it on record that we are not moving away or trying to run an entity without rules and guidelines, without policies and procedures, nor without procurement policies. We do intend, as part of our reorganization, to utilize those rules and regulations that are a part of the DPP concept and have it approved by our governing board. For full transparency, I want to say that in addition to the legislative mandate that you mentioned, that in fact in FY2026, the transfer in to the central government or the general fund was \$1.1 million traditionally prior to FY2026. It was actually \$900,000, however, during this last budget markup, we increased that because we saw the potential and of the Virgin Islands Lottery and we increased it by \$200,000. So, of course, the FY2026 transfer in contribution is \$1.1 million. At this time, we'll open up the floor to my colleagues.

0:07:59 Senator Gittins, you recognize your three minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the intent of this piece of legislation to clarify actually the structure of the... of this operation here with the Lottery, the landscape for gaming and games of chance in the Virgin Islands. And I currently have legislation that would place all games of chances, including the operations of the Lottery Office, under the regulatory oversight of the Virgin Islands Casino Commission. So, my interest today is not necessarily to debate the merits of either structure just yet, but to understand from the agencies how these approaches might interact and which structure would best serve the people of this territory in terms of oversight, accountability and efficiency. I also want to note for the record that this legislation proposes structural changes to the governance and autonomy of the VA Lottery. I want to note that this legislation proposes the importance of the legislation and the legislation proposes the legislation that we have to do. I want to note that this legislation is not necessarily to be a part of the legislation that we have to do. I want to note that this legislation is not necessarily to be a part of the legislation that we have to do.

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0:10:31 and the Finance Commissioner was supposed to be here. And my questions were basically to them as I wanted to ask about the regulatory, not only the regulatory structure and oversight, but the financial and accountability considerations and the role of the OMB Director as part of the current Lottery Commission. But they're not here, so I am unable to ask those questions to those individuals. But I do understand the concept, and I will listen to the debate today, or listen to the comments made, and make a decision as we move forward.

- 0:11:22 But I do fully understand the concept of what's proposed before us today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much, Senator Gittins. Before we go to the next senator, which was B. Senator Carla J. Joseph, I wanted to ask you, Executive Director Williams, what is the current commission composite? Who makes up the commission at this time? So the current membership, as Senator Gittins aptly mentioned, is the Commissioner of Finance as a chair. The director of the director of Office of Management and Budget, we have Commissioner Lloyd Daly, who represents St. Croix as a lottery dealer. We have Commissioner Vernon Finch, who represents the St. Thomas, St. John district. The compilation of membership allows for two additional members, one each to represent dealers or agents, and one public person. Okay. But we currently have four members sitting. Very well. And in respect to audits, when was your last audit, or are you up to date and current with your audits? We were on track.
- 0:12:38 I think the last audit that we fully completed was in FY 2021. Ms. Proctor, you can assist me here. And let me just say that the reason that we fell behind it was because of their cyber attack that we experienced twice. And the fact that our information, financial data, was encrypted, we had to basically build that whole car back from scratch. So we are working feverishly. We have some interns that are assisting in restoring, not only just restoring information, but getting the information that is required by our outside auditor. Ms. Proctor? And if you could just explain, Ms. Proctor, in terms of your timeline, to be able to, which audit will be completed and which timeline.
- 0:13:26 Good afternoon. As Director Williams said, our last complete audit was fiscal year 2021. We are presently working with the contractors to import to the data for fiscal year 2022 and to have it to the auditors. We are hoping to have it to them sooner than later. We've been having a lot of challenges. So we're in March now. So I'm hoping we would have everything in at least by the end of April for the auditors to be able to review and begin the audit. Thank you. Thank you for that.
- 0:13:57 Our point of information, Senator Gittins, you recognize? Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Like I said, I didn't have any questions really before, but to something the Director testified on with the drains biweekly. I mean, how much times? Yeah. Yes, every other week. So about 24 to 26 drains, correct? So how many drains have we had rollovers? And do you have any data from the VLTs to determine how much we've generated from the VLTs and even that from Southland Gaming as the operator on the track?
- 0:14:47 We don't have any rollovers. We don't have any rollovers. Lattery doesn't do rollovers. You don't have any rollover what? I didn't hear you. Sorry. No, we don't do rollovers. We do our drawings biweekly and the numbers are selected using a random number generator process. The numbers either are sold or are not sold. If they are sold, the bearer of that ticket gets paid.
- 0:15:16 If not, that revenue stays in the coffers of the VI Lattery. And yes, we do receive reports weekly from Southland Gaming highlighting all of our retail establishments and our entertainment centers. So we do have that information maintained in our possession. And you asked something about the horse racing? You said you have the data for Southland Gaming, what we generated, and for the VLTs?
- 0:15:47 Southland Gaming is a contractor of the VLTs. Okay. So do you have the data as to how much we generate? Yes, we do. Not here today because we didn't come here prepared for that conversation, but yes, we do. So we get the information on a weekly basis for all our retailers on St. Thomas and St. John and for our entertainment centers on St. Thomas. Thank you. Ms. Procter, do you have the information?
- 0:16:20 Can you provide the information in terms of the revenues? Well, the last report I have right now is as of December 31st, and as of December we generated \$3.5 million. \$3.5 million, and that will be for annual calendar? That was the first quarter fiscal year, 2026. 2026. First quarter? Mm-hmm. \$3.5 million. Sorry, let me see if I gave you the right column. Yeah, \$3.5 million actually. \$3.5 million, first quarter? First quarter.
- 0:16:56 2026. Mm-hmm. Thank you. Senator Joseph, you're recognized for your three minutes. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. We know the VLT and this Virgin Islands Lottery is a money-generating entity. We didn't need to have the executive director of the lottery say it. We know that your operations is good. My only red flag is that you need to get your audits up to date. That's a critical component, and you shouldn't have any excuse to do that, unless, of course, your excuse is this portion of this bill, which speaks to your autonomy so you could get your contractors in to do the work, and you don't have to be held up by going through the Department of Property and Procurement.
- 0:17:50 You're one of the few entities, quote-unquote, semi-autonomous, that I see that don't have your own procurement process, and you have to rely on the central government outside of the election system. So what was the impetus of the AG opinion? If somebody could tell me that, what caused the AG to or caused someone or caused the lottery to request an attorney general's opinion? Senator, we did not request an opinion.

- 0:18:27 It was requested by Property and Procurement a few years ago. We were living in the Franklin Building prior to the storm shortly thereafter when I took office. We moved out of that structure because it was environmentally unsound. In trying to build out the new location where we're at next to Moe's, there was a conversation had by the then-Commissioner Thomas, and he basically told us that, you know, we could not do anything unless we had gone through them. One minute. I'm sorry? Go ahead. Go ahead.
- 0:19:11 And my response to him basically was, I am not going to allow my employees to die in a debt trap. So, you know, we're not going to allow for the minutiae to hold us back on getting it. And at that point, he requested it. And then Attorney General, Denise George, wrote that opinion that we highlighted in my testimony. I would, I love to read. So I would, I'm interested in seeing a copy. If you could provide it through the chair, the Attorney General.
- 0:19:42 And I'm very appreciative that you provided the history of how we are looking at this change in law. Now, let me ask you. We invited two of your board members here today. And one of them is your chairperson. Did you discuss this bill on any of your board meetings? And did your chairman say, yes, we should move forward with the bill?
- 0:20:16 Yes. The answer to both is yes. The answer to both is yes? Correct. Okay. And then provide us with the minutes of that because did they vote on it or was it, how was it? Okay. Yes. Through the chair because those are documents. We want to be sure we are respecting the governance because then you are going to have to promulgate your, and the board is going to have to promulgate their own rules and policies and how you procure items. Correct? Am I, am I, okay, good.
- 0:20:49 Yes, yes, thank you. So that's one of, that's the other thing I would like to see because if it's voted in favor today, it's going to go through the rules committee. And my colleagues there are very meticulous and they will scrutinize all of these things. So I'm trying to stay ahead of the game. So I don't have an issue just as long as I see those, those documents. And I need to find out when you're going to promulgate your rules and regulation, your policy. Do you have currently a policy in place for you?
- 0:21:26 We do, but it's outdated. We just recently had a senior team leadership summit. One of those pieces is to update those policies and procedures. And as a matter of fact, to take, because some of them are outdated, just let's go there. And adding more current processes and pieces to the policy. So once the team has done the work, we go back to the commission for them to review and approve it as well. Okay, very good. I like hearing those things.
- 0:22:08 Now, just wrapping up quickly, I just want to say, I know one of my colleagues sent this to, you know, move this lottery under the auspices of the Virgin Islands Casino Control Commission. I'm going to just put it out there. I am not 100% sold and you got to sell me 100%. You are a money generating entity. You actually don't ask for any money from us. And that's a good thing. You give, you are giving. And you gave the current chairman who is sitting here, who is also the chairperson for our committee on budget and appropriation and finance. You, we raised it. We can't even collect the money. We needed to collect from WICO, the pilot, for years.
- 0:23:02 And that's also a semi-autonomous. And we need the money. We have a lot of services that are needed here. And we just appropriated 1.72 million to the Virgin Islands Casino Control Commission. This, this body. We appropriated no money to you. So, at the time when you're ready, I am going to vote in the affirmative for this legislation to give you full autonomy. Because you are producing. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for the time. Thank you very much, Senator Carla J. Joseph. And next, the chair will recognize Senator Ray Fonseca. You're recognized for your three minutes.
- 0:23:45 Yes, thank you. Pleasant, good afternoon. Director Ray Williams. You know, we both got the same name because I'm Ray Williams Fonseca. My mother's name is Linel Williams. So, always good to see you. I got some tough questions for you today, though. Okay, so, give me an update. I know you had a ransomware attack. You were able to, you know, get back in line.
- 0:24:15 How often were you doing the backups before the ransomware attack as opposed to now? So, we had two attacks. When the information was encrypted on the first attack we had, we were able to restore the equipment, I mean, the information. And I got to be very careful because, you know, we live in a society where when you put information out of these people... Yeah, don't disclose anything that's going to harm you.
- 0:24:47 So, yes, we were able to restore it because we had the backups on the first one. And the second one, the host for the cyber attack literally pulled everything down. So, we did not pay a ransom. And we decided to go back to paper and pull out all the information. And as a result of that, that's what took us quite some time. But, Senator, we didn't lose nothing financially. I think it's important to put that out there as well. You know, I think the chairman mentioned what he said, when you play the V.I. lottery, everybody wins.
- 0:25:39 Well, you know, I'm one of them that I play a little 30 dollars, but I don't win. One minute. So, but I guess it'll come around some time. So, I want to ask, you know, the machines are... They're connected to a central monitoring system so

that you can track the activity. Is that correct? If that's correct, tell me exactly in layman terms, what does that mean? You're speaking about the video library terminals. Yes. Yes. The SAS system gives us the opportunity. We have the regulatory responsibility and oversight to ensure that all the VLTs are working correctly. That equipment is certified by Gaming Laboratories, Inc. We get reports on a continuous basis. We have our law enforcement team that goes out to, we call them zones. We have like three or four zones on St. Thomas and St. John.

0:26:42 And we send the team out at random to do inspections, money in, money out and stuff like that. Yes. So, that's how that works. Mr. Chair, if I can just wrap up real quick. So, then you get a percentage of the Gaming revenue. So, since you can monitor them, it's never a question as to your percentages. It's no disagreement ever with that percentage? That's absolutely correct. No disagreement.

0:27:14 What was the total revenue there? You gave a figure of \$3.5 million in the first quarter. Was that revenue included in the \$3.5 million? Yes. It was. Well, what was that? What was that number of the \$3.5 million? Like I said, we didn't come here prepared to have a financial discussion today. But what we can do is we can provide through the Chair that information to the body. Yes. Thank you. Through the Chair, I'll make that request. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the time. Thank you very much, Senator Fonseca. Next, the Chair will recognize Senator Alma Francis.

0:27:50 Heiliger, you recognize for your three minutes. Good day to my colleagues, to the people of the territory, to the testifiers. During the state of the territory, one of the things I heard the governor of the Virgin Islands say he wanted was to merge lottery and the casino commission. So I'm trying to figure out what we are doing as a body because I have legislation to open up casinos across the territory. Another colleague has legislation to merge lottery and the casino commission. And this one is to make them autonomous and, you know, give them a little bit more power from what I'm seeing here. There has to be some happy medium because it seems like we're all going in multiple directions as to what might be in the best interest for this commission because we have different thoughts on it. This lottery, my question is, earlier it was stated that you don't do rollovers.

0:29:03 Is there a reason why rollovers don't happen? Because I potentially see that as a way to help boost sales or encourage people to continue to keep buying. Because based on what you're saying to me, you could have had a whole entire session and nobody won the half a million dollar prize and you just keep it. That's what it sounds like without potentially rolling it over and making the half a million a million until somebody gets the big prize like you see the others. So explain to me why that is, is that something has to be legislated or just an internal policy that you just keep the money after the tickets are sold?

0:29:50 There are several things, Senator. Mathematically, it's a bad thought process. Consider that exponentially, what we generate per drawing, the number of tickets sold, the revenues that it's generated, if you, let's say, generated \$200,000, \$300,000 per drawing and you had a quote-unquote roll over and the volume of tickets weren't sold and that next go around, it would literally be, at some point, it would become zero neutral and you would never have the funding to pay that dollar for yourself.

0:30:33 So basically, we are potentially having a lottery that might not be making the type of money that you guys are saying you make. Because if you can't even make enough to do a roll over, we should be having a serious look at how the lottery functions overall. I mean, I have been paying attention to what's been happening with this lottery over the years. I mean, yes, we heard about the cyber attacks, the million-dollar ransom. I wrote a whole list down. The recovery efforts, fraud convictions. I even remember there were articles back as 2000s where you had financial deficits. You ultimately got out of that, the ghost employees.

0:31:28 I remember that one recently. Even the one where the fire, where you had, and this is alleged, during an investigation with the inspector general's office, people set the place afire, I'm assuming, according to what was reported or shared, to hide information of stealing. And I'm sitting here like, some of these things haven't even been resolved, but we're having a conversation about giving you more autonomy.

0:32:03 I, you know, well, I'm not finished, but I'll let you, if you, so I'm looking at it as a whole, you know, gamut of things. And I like to feel comfortable. And I know earlier you stated that it's not going to be a financial conversation, but we actually invited the two financiers here. Could I just make my final statement? And I'm sure he could respond on the chair's time. You may wrap up for some of those, go ahead. The two finance there, thank you, I appreciate it.

0:32:36 O&B and finance were to be here, so we were supposed to be having somewhat of a financial conversation, which we can't have today because they're not here. So for me, I can't see myself pushing this forward to give this agency autonomy and make them autonomous when I need to have a financial conversation as, is this in our best interest? So, you know, I will continue to listen. And Mr. Chair, thank you for the additional time. And if Mr. Williams has anything he would like to share, I'm sure he could do it on your time. Thank you so much.

- 0:33:15 Thank you very much, Senator Alma Francis-Hardega, Executive Director. Williams, anything that responds to the Senator's concern? There's a lot. The Senator just espoused a whole discourse, none of which, of any of those things that she just put out there happened during my tenure, number one. Number two, I want to go back to correcting something about rollovers again, because it's something that comes up occasionally from time to time. I am here at a conference in the States with MUSCLE, the Multistate Lottery Association, which is a consortium of states that run lotteries. I made it, I made mention of 31 of these states are either independent, autonomous, or they are considered cooperations.
- 0:34:13 Mega Million and Powerball, the two games that this consortium manages, they have rollovers. You know how they are afford rollovers, because we have to invest in an insurance that would pay for that value of a winning, whatever that winning is. And comparing the Virgin Islands of 82,000 people, where we don't even have, I would say, 17,000 people playing our games on an average drawing, to inject the stock process of wanting to do a rollover, it is asinine at best, because the lottery is financially sound. The lottery pays all its bills, and not just it pays it on time.
- 0:35:06 Unlike central government, where you have deficits and bills cannot be paid, every vendor that the VIA Lottery has is paid. We have a rule of thumb within 10 days. We generally pay all our bills within two to three days. We pay out our mandatory transfers. Out of all that money, all that revenue that is generated, either via our Scratch and Instant Games, Powerball and Mega Million, and our video lot of return. So, you know, the whole concept of suggesting a rollover, and we need to, I am sorry, but, you know, that is definitely a bad idea, to say the least. And, you know, people will say what they want, but, you know, fact from fiction, you know, we have the supportive evidence to show you that what we do is real. I don't think you intend to use the word asinine, right?
- 0:36:09 Right? Correct. Thank you. Senator, every lowest you recognize for, Bill Sponsor, you recognize for your three minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Colleagues, long before, even before this bill became performed, I had meetings with Director Williams, Director, Julia Reimer, and Commissioner McCurdy. Not to disclose his business, but I know you have a family emergency, and I wish him, Director, Commissioner McCurdy, I wish him and his family well.
- 0:36:49 Uh, with what they're dealing with, Commissioner, Director, Reimer, I'm hearing from my staff, did touch base and said that he couldn't make it today, but we did have meetings. I reached out to the Governor Chief of Staff, Kevin Williams, I reached out to the Governor himself, asked, with this legislation, what ladder is asking, how does this mess with anything that I heard you talked about in the state of the territory? He said, one, no, have nothing to do with the other, and, you know, I haven't formalized or made my mind up with what I'm doing.
- 0:37:25 Governor Albert Bryan's word to me. Director Williams. Good afternoon. Good afternoon, sir. You could tell the people, and assist me, how many different meetings we have had back and forth, even with the attorneys. As of late, after yesterday, just before, I mean yesterday morning, sorry, before you traveled, we even said, well, you know, just for full transparency, let's just make an amendment to make sure that we're saying that we're going to adapt or any applicable laws, procurement laws, so we could be crystal clear.
- 0:38:08 We even said we're going to add about, in the laws that talk about sued or be sued, we talked about what goes for every other board. Am I incorrect? You're absolutely correct, Senator. Matter of fact, we met, I've been trying to move this amendment forward. Director, you've got to talk a little more to your mic, because it's the nagra for having trouble to hear you. Okay. I said, I've been attempting to move this amendment, these amendments forward for almost a year now. I've had numerous discussions, like you mentioned, with the governor and his legal counsel, and the whole idea. Go ahead, go ahead, Senator, Director.
- 0:38:53 I just want to make it clear again that what we're attempting to do here has zero to do with any proposed legislation to do anything else. We're just trying to strengthen our baseline to ensure that we can continue to be competitive and become even more competitive, to give us the opportunity to even generate more revenues, because there's a whole series of things that I'm not going to disclose here that will help to enhance our revenue generation. But until such time, as we have full autonomy, we've got to take the bureaucracy out of it so that we can propel our enterprise. But yes, we have met on several occasions to discuss this measure.
- 0:39:45 Thank you. Again, colleagues, if it wasn't watered, I wasn't bringing it. Time. But I said before, and I stand by my testimony, that Lattery has been delivering and continue to deliver. That is the one agency that we will call on and count on. There's others.
- 0:40:12 There's others. But Lattery have done and have been self-sustaining. And this body, the chairman spoke about increasing the contribution to the general fund. They squawk a little bit, but they complain. And that's why this legislation is here. And I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time. Thank you very much, Senator Lewis. At this time, I'll give you a 30-second. I'll wrap up. To information. Point of information, Senator Alma-Francis Heidegger.

- 0:40:49 Thank you. I was a little loud because I was trying to get media to hear me, to turn on the mic. I would like to know what specifically is asinine in regards to questioning why there's no rollovers, or questioning why certain things have happened at the lottery that some have been resolved, some haven't. But we're now pushing forward to potential autonomy.
- 0:41:24 And, you know, I was under the impression that that was a legitimate concern. But to hear my colleagues or one of them refer to it as asinine, I am a little bit taken back. Because each of us are independent thinkers, at least I hope. That's a lie. Because a lot of us aren't. One second. One second, Senator. One second. Yes. The executive director is the one that alluded to utilize the word.
- 0:41:57 And I had him correct it that that was not the word that he intended to use. So let's be clear on what we're saying. Oh, yeah. I heard all of that. You corrected him, but that's what he said. Okay. So you just mentioned that your colleagues talked about it. So I wanted to be clear in exactly what you're saying for the record. You did. Okay. But at the end of the day, he said it. So I'm trying to understand what exactly was wrong with asking those legitimate questions. And I'll give him an opportunity to respond. Thanks.
- 0:42:37 Can I speak now? Am I waiting for something? Yeah, you may respond. Oh, okay. Yeah, I, the statement I made speaks to the fact that, you know, we continue to, for some reason, put things, impediments on the table or in the way. I took over as a lottery executive director in 2019. The issue with the fires and all the other pieces that were put on the table. What I'm saying to you, Senator and senators, is that the VI lottery is a very established and viable entity. We have proven for almost 90 years, for almost 90 years, that this enterprise is producing, highly producing, generating its revenue, putting that money right back into our community.
- 0:43:38 But when we, when we, when we paint those pictures, those, those, those thoughts of negatives, it, it, it, it now impacts my playing community. Because they hear it from the legislature that, well, Senator said, I'm going to do a rollover. We all should do a rollover. I explained that the concept of rollovers happens here on a national level. Well, because fundamentally and financially, um, there are dollars that protect, um, the, the value, the value and volume of the amount of dollars that were required to pay out. You recently saw, uh, an example where the Powerball went over 1.7 billion dollars.
- 0:44:24 And that happened because of the multiplier effect of people playing the game nationally. Um, if you were to do a further, deeper dive into lotteries, um, internationally, the United States lottery gaming in the United States is, is small compared to Africa or, um, to North America, I mean, to Central and South America, um, to Europe. But, but in the Virgin islands, we always must, always must keep in mind at the front and foremost, at the core center of your mind that we have a finite population. There's only about so much money that people are going to invest in attempting to win more money. And finally, and further, whether somebody plays and they don't win a cash prize that don't, the, the idea that the money, it doesn't, I, I don't put that money in the bank like that. That money has mandatory transference. The loss speaks to how much of that money, the VL lottery can maintain to pay its bills, its employees and stuff like that.
- 0:45:29 Less than 20%. All of that money goes back to the community. Oh, real quickly. Satya, he finished? Yes, I appreciate it. No, I just want to quickly wrap up. I want to thank you for putting that on the record. But at the end of the day, there was absolutely nothing I stated here did not happen. Whether it happened during your tenure before or it could happen after, everything was factual. So I gather all information to make an informed decision. So for you to make reference to things being asinine, which reference somebody's intelligence or lack thereof, donkey-like behavior, stupidity, that is the definition of asinine. And I for sure don't represent any of the donkeys in here. I'm independent. So I would refer, if you're going to speak to me, keep those type of statements.
- 0:46:20 Thank you. Thank you, Senator. Executive Director Williams, just a quick constituent concern real quickly. They ask if, what or not, do special numbers ever win? And if all of the numbers are placed into the drawing? Yes and yes. Can you expand? Yes and yes. Special numbers do in, all 34,000 numbers are put into every drawing. On the extraordinary drawing, all 40,000 numbers are put into the drawing. See, the concept is not a physical ball that you put into a machine. It's an algorithm that does the drawing. And just to strengthen that position, the same random number generator that we utilize for our drawings here in the territory are the same. It is best industry, best practices. That's the same equipment that does Powerball, Mega Million, and practically every state that is affiliated with lotteries utilize that game. As a matter of fact, Puerto Rico, they are now going through a process to adopt the RNG process and move away from the manual draw processes.
- 0:47:48 At this time, Executive Director Williams, I'll give you 30 seconds to wrap up. You know, I want to apologize to Senator Francis Aliga for the selection of my word. And it wasn't being espoused to call you anything out of yourself. I think we have a better relationship than that. So I do apologize for the choice of words. But it gets my goosebumps, if I can say that. Because when, you know, we keep hearing the different things that may have happened in the past, I don't deny

some or all of them may have happened. What I'm telling you, though, is that I am trying to move this product, this enterprise forward and not keep it in the words that we have opportunities to generate even more revenue if the lottery has autonomy. So I just want to thank you, Senators, and ask you for your definite consideration of these amendments. The lottery operated autonomously in the past. It was just because of Inspector General's opinion that turned us, basically brought us back into the fold of central government. I love being a part of the cabinet. But what I'm more proud of and what I'd like to see is that we move this product forward. That's part of my legacy. So again, I thank you. I thank the bill sponsor. I thank my staff. And I most of all thank our playing community for the support that you give the Virgin Islands lottery. Because when you play the VI lottery, everybody wins. Thank you, sir.

- 0:49:30 Thank you very much, Executive Director Raymond Williams. For your testimony at this time, the Committee of Government, Operation, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection stand in recess for two minutes. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- 0:52:03 Thank you. [1 such phrases repeated 9 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 0:56:33 Thank you. Thank you.
- 0:57:33 Thank you. Senator Joseph, yay. Senator Avery L. Lewis?
- 0:58:06 Yes. Senator Lewis, yay. Mr. Chair, you have six yays and one absent. Thank you very much, Madam Clerk. Bill number 36-0233, an act amending title 32, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 13, relating to the establishment and operation of the Virgin Islands Lottery will be held in committee until the call of the chair. Thank you. Thank you. You enjoy your birthday. Thank you, everybody.
- 1:00:26 legislative conference room. 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.

- 5x **Senator Carla Joseph**
the surname alone also matches: Clifford Joseph; Karla J. Joseph
heard in this transcript as: Carla J. Joseph, Joseph
- 5x **Senator Kenneth L. Gittens**
heard in this transcript as: Gittins
- 4x **Senator Avery Lewis**
heard in this transcript as: Avery L. Lewis, Lewis
- 3x **Senator Ray Fonseca**
heard in this transcript as: Fonseca
- 2x **Senator Alma Francis Heidegger**
heard in this transcript as: Alma-Francis Heidegger
- 2x **Senator Novelle Francis**
heard in this transcript as: Alma Francis
- 1x **Senator Athneil 'Bobby' Thomas**
heard in this transcript as: Thomas

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 36-0233