

BILL NO. 36-0100

Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

June 24, 2025

An act amending title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 25, subchapter V, section 559 relating to pay systems establishing a pay differential for French and Spanish speaking bilingual 911 Dispatch Operators, and amending title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 25, subchapter IV, section 522, relating to entrance and promotion tests, to provide for foreign language proficiency tests

PROPOSED BY: Senator Franklin D. Johnson

1 **WHEREAS**, the Virgin Islands is a multi-lingual community with many residents and
2 visitors whose primary language is not English;

3 **WHEREAS**, 911 Dispatch Operators have to communicate with individuals in
4 emergency situations;

5 **WHEREAS**, Spanish and French are the other primary languages that are spoken in the
6 territory;

7 **WHEREAS**, a pay differential for 911 Dispatch Operators with a demonstrated
8 proficiency in English and Spanish or French would help with recruitment and retention of 911
9 Dispatch Operators; and

10 **WHEREAS**, when individuals who speak only Spanish or French call the 911 Public
11 Safety Answering Points there will be an increased likelihood that they will be able to
12 effectively communicate with a 911 Dispatch Operator in Spanish or French; Now, Therefore,

1 ***Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:***

2 **SECTION 1.** Title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 25, subchapter V, section 559, is
3 amended by adding the following subsection (g) :

4 “(g) All bilingual 911 Dispatch Operators of the Virgin Islands Territorial Management
5 Agency fluent in French or Spanish shall be paid a differential of ten percent of their basic
6 compensation which shall be in addition to their basic compensation.

7 (1) Eligibility under this subsection requires that an operator must be certified by
8 the Director of the Division of Personnel as being proficient in English, and Spanish or
9 French under section 522(a) of this chapter.

10 (2) Operators who receive a foreign language proficiency pay differential shall
11 use their foreign language proficiency in the performance of their duties as a 911 Dispatch
12 Operators and are required to recertify each year.”

13 **SECTION 2.** Title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 25, subchapter IV, section 522,
14 subsection (a) is amended as follows:

15 (1) By inserting “, foreign language proficiency tests,” after “entrance tests”; and

16 (2) By inserting “, differential pay qualification lists” after “employment lists”.

17 **BILL SUMMARY**

18 This bill amends title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 25, subchapter V, section 559 by
19 inserting a subsection (g) that allows for a ten percent pay differential for French and Spanish-
20 speaking bilingual 911 dispatch operators of the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency
21 Management. It also amends title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 25, subchapter IV, section
22 522 by adding a foreign language proficiency examination to be administered by of the Division
23 of Personnel.

24 **BR25-0140/June 23, 2025/LMW**