

**Presentation of Attorney General Designee Claude E. Walker
Committee on Government Services, Veterans and Consumer Affairs
Thirty-First Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Earle B. Ottley Legislative Chambers, St. Thomas, VI**

Good morning Mr. Chairman, Madame Vice-Chairperson, Senators, legislative staff, and to those of you in the listening and viewing audience. My name is Claude Earl Walker, Attorney General Designee and with me today is Renée Gumbs Carty, the Deputy Attorney General. I am, of course, honored to be here today to discuss Bill No. 31-0071.

What this Bill seeks to do is to “amend title 33 Virgin Islands Code, section 2549 to provide for criminal penalties for violations of the attachment and sale of property provisions and to provide for the prohibition against making procedural or regulatory changes that abridge the rights of property owners.”

I understand this Bill comes in the wake of recent arrests by the Virgin Islands Department of Justice as well as the Inspector General’s audit report that made some very troubling and disturbing findings concerning the manner in which property auctions had been conducted in the past throughout the Territory.

I will support this Bill’s enactment, but let us be clear—as President Kennedy stated, “law alone cannot make men see right.” After all, there already exists provisions in both the U.S. Constitution and the Revised Organic Act, as well as numerous other civil and criminal statutes that seek to prevent exactly the type of activity this Bill aims to prohibit. And, yet, they were not enough to prevent these events from taking place

Today, we are committed to ending Territorial graft and public corruption, but laws alone will not solve this problem. This is not simply a problem to be resolved by the Governor,

legislators, or the Inspector and Attorneys General. It must be solved by each employee working within the government to personally commit to having the courage and conviction to not only conduct their own affairs in an honorable fashion, but also to see that others working around them do the same. It must be solved by each government employee desiring to do his or her duty with diligence and competence to ensure the law is followed and carried out in a just and efficient manner. And, it must be solved by everyone working within this system of government to be personally committed to stamping out public corruption.

With that, I will conclude my remarks and entertain any questions—except those concerning the ongoing criminal matter pertaining to this subject—that the distinguished committee members may have.