

TESTIMONY BY
SHARON ANN MCCOLLUM, PH.D.
COMMISSIONER
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT SERVICES,
CONSUMER AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
Earl B. Ottley Legislative Hall
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Good morning Honorable Chair, Senator Justin Harrigan Sr., members of the Committee on Government Services, Consumer and Veterans Affairs, other members of the 31st Legislature present, the listening and viewing audiences. I am Mrs. Muriel Fenton, Director of Financial Reporting & Program Quality Assurances, and present with me today is Mrs. Gerda Sebastien, Director of the Office of Budget and Business Affairs and Ms. Khadila Joseph, Contract Administrator. We are present on behalf of Sharon Ann McCollum, Commissioner of Education for the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE), who is unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict. We are here to provide testimony in support of Bill No. 31-0365 - An Act amending title 33 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 113 by adding a section 3101a providing for multiyear contracts Proposed by Senator Clifford F. Graham.

VIDE would like to begin by applauding Senator Clifford Graham for this provision and by emphasizing that VIDE is in full support of Bill No. 31-0365 - An Act amending title 33 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 113 by adding a section 3101a providing for multiyear contracts.

With the approval of Bill No. 31-0365, the Government of the Virgin Islands (GVI) will establish standards for managing multi-year contracts. Although multiple provisions are desired to fully address the concerns of VIDE and other user agencies, relative to Procurement activities and contractual processes, we are delighted that we are moving in this direction. Nevertheless, as we continue to work with and diligently support the Department of Property and Procurement efforts through this difficult transition, we are encouraged by the actions of this legislative body. The current Procurement processes only seem to exacerbate increases in operating costs for awarded contractors and a reduction in competitive bidding; thus, resulting in diminished program opportunities and the inability of the Department to enter into strategic partnerships that can support the much needed student achievement initiatives.

SUMMARY

VIDE fully support Bill No. 31-0365 - An Act amending title 33 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 113 by adding a Section 3101a providing for multiyear contracts. As we continue to work with DPP in support to streamline the current Procurement processes, we are confident this partnership will allow the Department to improve student outcomes. VIDE remains committed to our vision, mission and three state priorities, and will continue to work to ensure our students are college and career ready, while improving the organizational climate for students and staff. With the assistance of the administration and this legislative body, by emphasizing the need for improvements in academic achievement, teacher/leader effectiveness and organizational culture, we trust that the future remains positive for the Department and its cherished stakeholders, particularly our students.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes DOE's testimony. The members of VIDE are available to respond to any questions you or the members of the Committee may have about VIDE's testimony concerning Bill No. 31-0365 - An Act amending title 33 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 113 by adding a section 3101a providing for multiyear contracts Proposed by Senator Clifford F. Graham. Thank you.