#### COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

05/10/2023-REPORTED OUT TO THE FLOOR 04/25/2023-AMENDED AND REPORTED OUT TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY

# BILL NO. 35-0016

## **Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands**

## February 15, 2023

A Resolution honoring and commending the Board of Elections; the Supervisor of Elections, Caroline Fawkes; and the entire Virgin Islands Elections System team for their tireless service and contributions to the Virgin Islands community on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of the Virgin Islands Elections System

<b>PROPOSED BY:</b>	Senators Angel L. Bolques, Jr., Carla J. Joseph, and Marvin A. Blyden
	Co-sponsors: Ray Fonseca, Novelle E. Francis, Jr., Marise C. James and Samuel Carrión

1 WHEREAS, 2023 is the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Virgin Islands Elections System

2 ("Elections System") established in title 18 of the Virgin Islands Code by Act No. 936 on

3 February 20, 1963; and

4 **WHEREAS**, prior to the extensive revisions embodied in title 18 of the Virgin Islands

5 Code, the Elections System came under the auspices of the Colonial Council and, thereafter,

- 6 the Municipal Court of the Virgin Islands; and
- 7 WHEREAS, throughout its history, title 18 was subsequently amended multiple acts,
- 8 which ultimately established the Elections System as an autonomous agency of the Virgin
- 9 Islands Government, managed by the Office of the Supervisor of Elections and governed by an

elected Board of Elections thereby ensuring greater autonomy, administrative structure, and
 integrity; and

- WHEREAS, this structure provided the framework upon which the integrity and
  confidence in the Elections System has continued to grow; and
- 5 **WHEREAS**, 60 years later, the Elections System remains a time honored and vital part 6 of the local government and serves as the foundation and the guardian of our democracy; and
- WHEREAS, the Office of the Supervisor of Elections and the Board of Elections work
  collaboratively to conduct free, fair, accessible, secure and transparent elections; and
- 9 WHEREAS, an essential component of their joint mission is the education of the
  10 electorate through community outreach education and workshops; and
- WHEREAS, the steadfast adherence to this mission has enhanced understanding and appreciation of the voting process and has dramatically increased voter registration and turnout; and
- WHEREAS, as the Elections System evolves, the Board of Elections and the Supervisor of Elections, and the administrative staff continues to strive to improve the voting process through community outreach, education, and the employment of new and more efficient technology; and

18 WHEREAS, the public perception of the voting process depends largely on the voters' 19 experience at the polls, and the loyal team of poll workers who play a vital role in assisting 20 voters to seamlessly navigate new innovative voting technology should be lauded; and

- WHEREAS, the success of these combined efforts has been demonstrated by increased
   public confidence; and
- WHEREAS, the advent of early voting in concert with the initiation of new and more
  efficient voting technology has doubled voter participation since their implementation; and

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WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper to bestow official recognition upon the Board of
 Elections; the Supervisor of Elections, Caroline Fawkes; and the staff of the Elections System
 who have continued the growth of the election system; and

WHEREAS, the Virgin Islands Elections System is wholeheartedly committed to the
ideology expressed simply but profoundly by former President Barack Obama: "There is no
such thing as a vote that doesn't matter. It all matters."; Now, Therefore,

## 7 Be it resolved by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:

8 SECTION 1. The Legislature of the Virgin Islands, on behalf of the people of the Virgin 9 Islands, honors and commends the Board of Elections; the Supervisor of Elections, Caroline 10 Fawkes; and the entire Virgin Islands Elections System team, past and present, for their tireless 11 service as the Elections System commemorates the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Diamond Jubilee 12 Celebration of the establishment of the Virgin Islands Elections System: "Thriving with 13 Integrity, Elections System Celebrates Sixty".

SECTION 2. The President of the Legislature, or the President's designee, shall have a perma plaque copy of this Resolution prepared and presented to Caroline Fawkes, the Supervisor of Elections, at an appropriate ceremony.

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### **BILL SUMMARY**

18 This resolution honors and commends the Board of Elections, the Supervisor of 19 Elections, and the entire Virgin Islands Election System team, past and present, for their tireless 20 service and contributions to the Virgin Islands community on the celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> 21 Anniversary Diamond Jubilee.

22 BR23-0248/January 30, 2023/GC