

TESTIMONY

BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance
August 18, 2026



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ELECTIONS SYSTEM OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

1 **Introduction**

2 Good morning, Honorable Chairman Novelle Francis, Jr., Honorable
3 Vice-Chairman Marvin Blyden, Honorable members of the Committee
4 on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance, distinguished Senators,
5 legislative staff, members of the press, and all those joining us in
6 person and virtually.

7 Before I begin my testimony, I would like to ask everyone to please
8 stand and join me in observing a moment of silence in memory of
9 Board Member Attorney Michael Antonio Joseph.

10 During this minute, please reflect in your own way as we honor his
11 life, service, and contributions.

12 One minute of silence. Thank you. Please be seated.

13 I am Caroline Fawkes, Supervisor of Elections, a Certified Elections
14 Registration Administrator. Joining me is Mr. Raymond A. Williams,
15 Chairman of the Board of Elections, a Certified Elections
16 Administrator and Ms. Denise Moore – Administrator of Fiscal &
17 Personnel Services.

18 We are honored to present the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 budget for
19 the Elections System of the Virgin Islands.

20 This proposal represents more than numbers on a page—it reflects
21 our commitment to strengthening democracy in the Virgin Islands. It

outlines the resources necessary to support both the Board of Elections and the Office of the Supervisor, while highlighting our accomplishments, addressing ongoing challenges, and setting a vision for the future.

This budget is more than a financial request—it is a strategic investment in democracy, designed to strengthen election security, expand voter access, and ensure the integrity of every vote cast across our Territory.

Governance & Structure

The Board of Elections serves as the elected policy-making body of the Election System, consisting of fourteen dedicated members representing both the St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix districts. Each member serves a four-year staggered term, ensuring both continuity and fresh perspectives. Importantly, two members from the St. Thomas/St. John District are residents of St. John, preserving equitable representation across our islands.

The current Board Members are: Chairman Raymond J. Williams, Vice Chairman Kareem T. Francis, Secretary Barbara LaRonde, and members Shikima L. Jones, Atanya Springette, Cleopatra Peter, Harriet Mercer, Lilliana Belardo de O’Neal, CERA, Chaneel Callwood, Lydia Hendricks, CERA, Nathan Fletcher, Franz Christian, Cornelius

43 Jn Baptiste and Epiphane Joseph. Together, they bring a diverse
44 range of expertise, leadership, and commitment to public service.

45 Supporting the Board is the Office of the Supervisor of Elections,
46 which operates across all three islands and serves as the operational
47 engine of election administration.

48 At the heart of our work is a commitment to excellence, transparency,
49 and service. We ensure that every eligible voter can participate, every
50 vote is counted accurately, and every election is conducted with
51 integrity. In doing so, we not only uphold the law, but inspire
52 confidence, build community trust, and help shape the future of the
53 Virgin Islands.

54 We take pride in creating voting environments that are accessible,
55 welcoming, and fully equipped for every eligible voter. Our team
56 manages critical functions such as maintaining and updating voter
57 records, ensuring seamless transfers for residents who relocate, and
58 coordinating the strategic placement of trained election officials at
59 polling locations. From developing comprehensive budget proposals
60 to managing payroll for hundreds of election workers, our staff
61 ensures that every operational detail is executed with excellence.

62 What sets our office apart is the breadth and depth of responsibility
63 entrusted to our team. We are not only administrators, but we are

64 also planners, coordinators, analysts, and ambassadors of
65 democracy. During peak election periods, our staff works with
66 heightened focus and efficiency to streamline voter registration and
67 support real-time election operations, demonstrating resilience,
68 adaptability, and teamwork.

69 At the heart of these efforts is a dedicated and highly skilled team of
70 professionals who bring expertise, passion, and commitment to this
71 critical work. I would like to recognize:

72 Ms. Kevermay Douglas, CERA – Deputy Supervisor, St. Thomas/St.
73 John District.

74 Mr. Terrell Alexandre, CERA – Deputy Supervisor, St. Croix District

75 Ms. Milagritos Venzen and Mrs. Ulette Todmann-Hodge – Senior
76 Elections Assistants, providing leadership and operational continuity

77 Ms. Mari Felix, Ms. Stephanie Joseph, Ms. Sheri Richardson, Mr. Uri
78 Peters, and Mrs. Mariana Romero – Elections Assistants, serving on
79 the front lines of voter support and election operations.

80 Ms. Tricia Johnson – Administrative Assistant, ensuring the
81 efficiency of daily office functions.

82 Ms. Denise Moore – Administrator of Fiscal & Personnel Services,
83 overseeing fiscal management, budgeting, grants, and personnel
84 operations.

85 Mr. Richard Wilson – Board Executive Assistant, performing the
86 administrative duties supporting the governance and operations of
87 the Board of Elections.

88 Each of these individuals plays a critical role in ensuring that our
89 election system operates with professionalism, accuracy, and
90 integrity. Their work reflects not only technical skill, but a deep
91 commitment to public service and democratic values.

92 I am also proud to note that we continue to prioritize fair and
93 competitive compensation, ensuring all employees receive a livable
94 wage, a crucial step in attracting and retaining dedicated
95 professionals in this essential field.

96 Together, our team represents a workplace defined by purpose,
97 growth, and impact—where every role contributes directly to
98 strengthening democracy in the Virgin Islands.

99 I would like to take a moment to highlight two extraordinary
100 individuals who truly represent the spirit of excellence within our
101 organization: Mrs. Mariana Romero, Elections Assistant, the St.
102 Croix District Employee of the Year, and Ms. Milagros Venzen, Senior
103 Elections Assistant the St. Thomas/St. John District Employee of the
104 Year.

Mrs. Romero and Ms. Venzen exemplify the core values of our organization—accuracy, accountability, and a strong commitment to the democratic process. Their accomplishment reflects not only their individual dedication and professionalism but also inspires excellence throughout the entire team.

Through their leadership, work ethic, and commitment, they remind us of the key role we play in strengthening democracy in the Virgin Islands.

Please join me in congratulating and recognizing their well-deserved distinction as our 2026 Employees of the Year.

Cybersecurity & System Protection

Protecting election infrastructure remains one of our highest priorities. To strengthen the security and resilience of our elections, we maintain active partnerships with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) in Washington, D.C., the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands Bureau of Information Technology. These collaborative relationships provide critical expertise, resources, and support that help safeguard our election systems against evolving threats. Further demonstrating this commitment, I have proudly served on the Virgin Islands Cybersecurity Advisory Council for the past two years,

working alongside public and private sector partners to enhance cybersecurity throughout the Territory.

For the past three years, we have participated in a monthly Cybersecurity Hygiene program, and the reports have consistently identified no significant cybersecurity concerns within our election systems. This ongoing monitoring provides an additional layer of assurance that our network and technology infrastructure remain secure and well-maintained. To further protect voter information, our voter registration database is hosted by Elections Systems & Software (ES&S) in Nebraska. The system includes robust backup and redundancy measures designed to ensure the continuity, integrity, and availability of voter registration records. These safeguards help protect critical election data and support uninterrupted operations, while maintaining the confidentiality and security of sensitive information.

Voter Participation and Election Integrity

Before discussing the budget, it is important to understand what these numbers truly represent, not just ballots cast, but public confidence in our democratic process.

These numbers tell an important story.

146 They demonstrate that voters have meaningful access to the electoral
147 process. They show that expanded voting options, such as early
148 voting, are meeting the needs of our community. Most importantly,
149 they reflect public confidence in the integrity, security, and reliability
150 of our elections.

151 Every ballot cast represents a voter who trusts that their voice will be
152 heard and their vote will be counted accurately. That trust is built
153 through years of careful planning, secure systems, transparent
154 processes, and the dedication of election professionals committed to
155 safeguarding democracy.

156 This is the true measure of election integrity—not only conducting
157 elections that are secure and accurate but fostering the public
158 confidence necessary for citizens to participate. When elections are
159 administered effectively, they do not generate headlines; they
160 generate trust. They strengthen civic engagement, promote stability,
161 and reinforce the legitimacy of our democratic institutions.

162 The investments reflected in this budget help ensure that we can
163 continue delivering selections that are accessible, secure,
164 transparent, and worthy of the public's trust.

165 As we look to the future, continued investment in election
166 infrastructure, voter education, technology, and cybersecurity will

167 help us build on this success, strengthen public confidence, and
168 ensure that every eligible voter has the opportunity to participate in
169 free, fair, and secure elections.

170 A majority of voters are engaged, nearly half (those are Inactive)
171 remain an opportunity for outreach and growth.

172 **What This Means**

173 These comparisons highlight something especially important:

- 174 • Our elections are competitive with, and in some respects
175 stronger than, national benchmarks.
- 176 • Our system is functional, accessible, and trusted enough to
177 draw participation.
- 178 • And our greatest work ahead is not fixing a broken system—but
179 building on a solid foundation.

180 **A Good News Story: Engagement in Action**

181 Let me share what that success looks like at the community level.

182 During voter outreach events, educational workshops, and voting
183 equipment demonstrations, we witness firsthand the impact of
184 making elections both accessible and understandable. We yearly
185 meet voters who arrive with questions, concerns, or uncertainty

186 about the voting process and leave with a greater sense of confidence
187 and trust.

188 We have spoken with senior citizens who were initially hesitant about
189 using the current voting technology but, after receiving hands-on
190 assistance and guidance, left feeling empowered and prepared to cast
191 their ballots independently. We have also engaged first-time voters
192 who were unfamiliar with the election process but, through education
193 and outreach, became informed and enthusiastic participants in our
194 democracy.

195 That transformation, from uncertainty to confidence, is one of the
196 clearest indicators of success for any election system. It reflects the
197 trust that voters place in the process and in the professionals
198 entrusted with administering it.

199 These outcomes do not happen by chance. They are the result of
200 deliberate investments in voter education, community engagement,
201 staff training, and transparency. They are made possible by election
202 workers who are committed to helping voters navigate the process
203 and ensuring that every eligible voter has the information and
204 resources needed to participate.

205 This is the standard we strive to uphold as an Elections System. Our
206 mission extends beyond simply conducting elections and counting

207 ballots. We are committed to creating a voting experience that is
208 accessible, secure, transparent, respectful, and efficient for every
209 voter.

210 Whether an individual chooses to vote early, cast an absentee ballot,
211 or vote on Election Day, our goal is the same: that every voter leaves
212 knowing their vote was cast securely, their voice was heard, and their
213 participation matters.

214 These individual experiences may seem small on their own, but when
215 repeated across thousands of voters throughout the Territory, they
216 create something much larger—public confidence in our electoral
217 system. It is that confidence, build one voter at a time, strengthens
218 election integrity, encourage civic participation, and reinforces trust
219 in our democracy year after year.

220 The Elections System has continued to evolve in ways that directly
221 benefit voters:

- 222 • Expanded early voting opportunities
- 223 • Increased absentee and overseas ballot access
- 224 • Improved public demonstrations of voting equipment
- 225 • Ongoing voter education and outreach programs

226 These efforts have helped remove barriers and meet voters where they
227 are—geographically, technologically, and informationally.

228 And that is especially important in a Territory like ours, where
229 geography matters. Serving St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John
230 requires not only planning—but mobility, coordination, and
231 consistency.

232 **Transparency and Accountability**

233 Today's voters expect transparency—and rightly so.

234 In response, the Elections System has strengthened:

- 235 • Clear communication of deadlines and requirements
- 236 • Public access to election data and results
- 237 • Public Testing of the Voting Machines and observation on
238 election night. This is exactly what transparency looks like. Election
239 officials openly invite the public to observe voting machine testing
240 and election-night operations, but the opportunity is too often
241 ignored by those who later question the process.

242 I encourage all residents to explore our official website:
243 www.vivote.gov. There, you will find election statistics, turnout
244 reports, district data, and voter resources that reflect the
245 transparency we are committed to maintaining.

246 **Looking Ahead: From Participation to Progress**

247 The story of elections in the Virgin Islands is not defined solely by
248 what we have achieved, it is defined by the opportunities that lie
249 ahead. While we take pride in voter turnout consistently exceeding
250 50 percent, our mission extends far beyond a single benchmark. Our
251 focus is on engaging the next voter, reaching the next underserved
252 community, and inspiring the next generation of civic participation.
253 Democracy is strongest when every eligible citizen has the knowledge,
254 confidence, and opportunity to make their voice heard. Every new
255 voter who participates strengthens the democratic process. Every
256 informed voter contributes to more meaningful civic engagement.
257 And every well-administered election reinforces public confidence in
258 our institutions.

259 As we look to the future, we remain committed to expanding voter
260 education, enhancing accessibility, embracing innovation, and
261 building stronger connections with the communities we serve. Our
262 goal is not simply to maintain participation, but to advance it,
263 ensuring that the Virgin Islands continue to set a positive example of
264 civic engagement and democratic responsibility.

265 The progress we have made is significant, but the work ahead is even
266 more important. Together, we will continue to strengthen public

trust, increase participation, and build an election system that serves every voter with integrity, transparency, and excellence.

Connecting Data to Purpose

When we discuss voter turnout—whether it is 54% in the Virgin Islands or comparable participation rates across the nation, we are talking about far more than numbers on a chart. These percentages represent real people exercising one of the most fundamental rights in a democracy.

They represent:

- A working parent taking time out of a busy schedule to cast a ballot.
- A senior citizen utilizing early voting options to participate with greater convenience.
- A young voter engaging in the democratic process for the very first time.

Each vote reflects a citizen's trust in the electoral process and a commitment to shaping the future of their community.

That is why every investment we make matters. Every voter education initiative, every community outreach effort, every demonstration of voting technology, and every enhancement to accessibility helps

287 remove barriers to participation and encourages greater civic
288 engagement.

289 Our goal is simple: to ensure that every eligible voter has the
290 opportunity, information, and confidence to participate. With
291 continued investment and support, we can build on our success,
292 increase engagement, and further strengthen democracy throughout
293 the Virgin Islands.

294 **Transition to Budget**

295 As we transition into the fiscal discussion, I encourage us to view this
296 budget as more than a collection of numbers and line items. It
297 represents an investment in a critical public service that:

- 298 • Serves more than 56,000 registered voters across the Virgin
299 Islands.
- 300 • Supports voter participation and election operations across St.
301 Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John.
- 302 • Safeguards the integrity, security, and accuracy of every ballot
303 cast.

304 Most importantly, it ensures that every eligible citizen has the
305 opportunity to make their voice heard and have that voice counted
306 and respected.

307 The Virgin Islands continues to demonstrate a strong culture of civic
308 engagement, with voter participation rates that compare favorably to
309 national averages. This is a testament to the effectiveness of our
310 election administration, voter outreach efforts, and the public's
311 confidence in the process.

312 At the same time, the data reminds us that there is still important
313 work ahead. While voter participation remains strong, thousands of
314 eligible voters have yet to engage in the electoral process. We do not
315 view this as a challenge alone—we view it as an opportunity.

316 **Why Budget Investment Matters?**

317 Every improvement in voter participation is linked to resources:
318 Outreach requires staffing, communications, and transportation.
319 Technology upgrades require ongoing contracts and cybersecurity
320 protection. Election operations require trained personnel and reliable
321 infrastructure. Without sustained investment, progress slows. With
322 investment, participation grows—and trust deepens.

323 Our present 2026 Budget expenditures is as follows:

324 Personnel \$784,297.00

325 Fringe \$306,347.00

326 Supplies \$46,250.00

327 Utilities \$45,563.39

328 Other Services \$745,783.00

329 **Total Expenditures: \$1,928,282.00**

330 Outstanding Vendor Payments – \$26,793.50

331 **FY 2027 Budget Request**

332 The proposed FY2027 budget is \$2,792,200.00 representing a 12%
333 increase over the prior fiscal year.

334 This increase is not discretionary—it is driven by essential needs:

335 Rising health insurance costs, impacting workforce stability

336 Required technology systems and professional services

337 Post-election compliance and federally mandated activities

338 Ongoing cybersecurity and system protection

339 Budget Allocation

340 54% – Salaries & Fringe Benefits

341 38% – Operations & Services

342 8% – Utilities and supplies

343 **Explicit Budget Justification**

344 **1. Maintain Operational Continuity**

345 The Elections System operates every day—not just during election
346 years. Voter registration records must be maintained, federal and
347 local reporting requirements must be met, election technology must

be monitored and supported, and statutory responsibilities must be fulfilled year-round. This funding provides the foundation necessary to ensure uninterrupted operations, maintain regulatory compliance, and preserve the efficiency and reliability of election services across the Territory.

2. Protect Election Integrity

The integrity of our elections depends on continuous investment in security, technology, and risk mitigation. Additional funding will strengthen cybersecurity defenses, safeguard sensitive voter data, protect critical election infrastructure, and ensure compliance with evolving federal security standards. These proactive measures reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen public confidence, and help ensure that every election is conducted in a secure and trustworthy environment. The cost of prevention is significantly less than the cost of recovering from a security incident or system failure.

3. Sustain a Qualified and Professional Workforce

Successful elections depend on knowledgeable, well-trained, and dedicated personnel. Funding supports the recruitment, retention, training, and professional development of election administrators, technical staff, and poll workers who are responsible for carrying out

complex election processes. Continued investment in our workforce helps maintain institutional knowledge, improve service delivery, and reduce the risk of operational errors that could affect election administration.

4. Strengthen Voter Engagement and Participation

Democracy is strongest when citizens are informed and engaged. With nearly half of registered voters currently inactive, additional resources are needed to expand voter education initiatives, conduct targeted outreach, and utilize modern communication platforms to connect with residents throughout the Territory. These investments will help increase public awareness, encourage civic participation, and ensure that voters have the information necessary to fully engage in the electoral process.

5. Ensure Equitable Service Across Three Islands

Providing election services throughout St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John requires a significant logistical commitment. Funding supports the transportation of personnel and equipment, deployment of technology, coordination of election operations, and delivery of consistent services across all districts. While the Territory's unique geography increases operational costs, it is essential to ensure that

388 every eligible voter, regardless of location, has equal access to
389 election services and opportunities to participate in the democratic
390 process.

391 **Voter Registration Snapshot as of July 31, 2026**

392 Total Registered Voters: 56,794

393 Active: 30,413

394 Inactive: 26,381

395 This represents a critical opportunity. Every inactive voter is a
396 potential participant. Investment in outreach directly translates into
397 increased engagement.

398 **Board of Elections Budget**

399 The Board remains dedicated to maintaining a transparent and
400 accountable electoral process through open meetings, public
401 demonstrations, and testing of voting systems, and election-night
402 procedures that promote confidence and understanding. These
403 resources enable us to continue operating with the highest levels of
404 transparency, ensuring that voters can have confidence that
405 elections are conducted fairly, securely, and accurately. A strong
406 democracy depends on public trust, and this budget helps safeguard
407 that trust for all Virgin Islands voters.

408 FY2026 Expenditure to date:

409 Salaries \$57,319.00

410 Fringe Benefits -\$25,012.00

411 Supplies - \$6,041.00

412 Other Services - \$54,636.00

413 Total: \$143,008.00

414 The Board requests \$310,000.00 to support governance and
415 oversight.

416 Budget Allocation

417 34% – Salaries & Fringe Benefits

418 66% – Supplies, Capital Outlay and Other Services

419 **Key Justification**

420 **1. Transportation: A Critical Operational Necessity**

421 Reliable transportation is not a convenience—it is a fundamental
422 requirement for the successful administration of elections
423 throughout the Virgin Islands. Current vehicle limitations have
424 created operational challenges that impact our ability to carry out
425 essential election functions efficiently and effectively.

426 Adequate transportation is necessary to:

- Transport voting equipment and election materials safely and securely.
- Conduct voter education and community outreach activities across our districts.
- Support coordination and operational activities between St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John.
- Respond quickly to election-related needs, emergencies, and time-sensitive assignments.

Without dependable transportation resources, critical election operations face delays, increased costs, and unnecessary risks that can affect our ability to serve voters effectively. A replacement van is required in the STT/STJ District, to maintain our self-sufficiency. The last estimated cost was over \$70,000.00.

2. Technology and Communication: Supporting Transparency and Continuity

In today's environment, modern communication technology is essential to maintaining efficient and transparent government operations. Investments in video teleconferencing systems and enhanced remote meeting capabilities allow the Elections System and

Board of Elections to conduct business effectively, regardless of location or unforeseen disruptions.

These technologies:

- Expand public access and participation in Board meetings.
- Improve communication and collaboration among Board members, staff, and stakeholders across districts.
- Support continuity of operations during emergencies or other unforeseen events.
- Enhance organizational efficiency while reducing travel-related costs and delays.

By investing in technology and communication infrastructure, we strengthen transparency, improve accessibility, and ensure uninterrupted governance.

3. Training and Certification: Investing in Professional Excellence

The administration of elections continues to evolve with changes in laws, technology, cybersecurity threats, and best practices. To meet these challenges, ongoing professional development is essential for both Board members and staff.

Continuous training and certification programs help ensure that personnel:

- Remain current with federal and local election laws and regulations.
- Implement nationally recognized election administration best practices.
- Strengthen cybersecurity awareness and election security preparedness.
- Maintain the highest standards of professionalism, accuracy, and accountability.
- Enhance public confidence in the integrity and reliability of the electoral process.

Investing in training is ultimately an investment in election integrity, operational excellence, and the trust voters place in our democratic system.

Connecting Budget to Outcomes

ESVI's operating budget has remained essentially unchanged since 2019, despite cumulative inflation exceeding 25 percent over the same period. As a result, the organization's purchasing power has declined significantly, meaning that a budget that could support

485 \$100 of services in 2019 now requires approximately \$126 to deliver
486 the same level of service.

487 This prolonged funding stagnation has increased pressure on
488 staffing, program delivery, and operational capacity, limiting ESVI's
489 ability to expand services, address growing community needs, and
490 respond to emerging demands. Without a corresponding increase in
491 funding, ESVI faces continued challenges in maintaining service
492 levels and ensuring long-term program sustainability.

493 This budget directly supports: Over 56,000 registered voters
494 Three-island election operations, Secure and transparent elections
495 Expanded voter access and outreach.

496 This is not a cost—it is an investment in democratic stability.

497 **The Reality of Modern Elections**

498 Today, election administration is no longer a basic administrative
499 function. It is a high-risk, high-responsibility operation requiring:

500 Advanced cybersecurity protections

501 Accurate and constantly maintained voter databases

502 Complex logistical coordination across three islands

503 Continuous public communication and engagement

504 Every component must work flawlessly—not occasionally, but
505 consistently.

506 Because when elections fail, even in small ways, public trust is the
507 first casualty.

508 **The Cost of Progress—and the Cost of Inaction**

509 Every improvement you have seen in our elections—expanded early
510 voting, improved voter access, stronger cybersecurity, better-trained
511 staff—has been made possible through investment. Progress is not
512 accidental. It is funded. And without continued investment, progress
513 does not pause it reverses. Without adequate funding: Outreach
514 efforts diminish, Technology becomes outdated, Security risks
515 increase, Workforce stability declines. The result is not immediate
516 failure—but gradual declining confidence in the electoral process.
517 And in elections, diminishing public trust is one of the greatest risks
518 we face.

519 **The Return on Investment**

520 When you fund the Elections System, you are not funding an agency
521 in isolation. You are investing in: Public trust, Government legitimacy
522 Civic participation, Democratic stability. Every dollar supports a
523 system that ensures that elections are credible, secure, accessible,
524 and trusted by the people. And when people trust elections, they
525 trust their government.

Accomplishments:

1. One of the Office of the Supervisor of Elections' key accomplishments during this budget period was the successful administration of the 2026 Primary Election Early Voting process, which concluded with a remarkable turnout of 7,113 voters' territory wide. This achievement reflects the effectiveness of the Elections System's voter outreach efforts, operational planning, and commitment to increasing voter participation. The turnout represented approximately 34% of active registered Democratic voters, demonstrating strong public engagement in the electoral process.

The successful execution of Early Voting was made possible through the coordinated efforts of Elections System staff, Board of Elections members, election officials, and partner agencies. Extensive planning, staff training, voter education initiatives, and logistical support ensured that voting centers operated efficiently, securely, and in compliance with all applicable election laws and procedures.

The Elections System maintained a safe and accessible voting environment that enabled thousands of electors across the Territory to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

Participation levels were strong across all districts, with 3,461 voters casting ballots in St. Croix, 3,444 in St. Thomas, and 208 in St. John. The successful completion of Early Voting reinforced public confidence in the election process and demonstrated the Elections System's continued commitment to transparency, accessibility, and electoral integrity. This accomplishment highlights the value of continued investment in election administration, technology, personnel, and voter engagement programs to further strengthen democratic participation throughout the Virgin Islands.

The 2026 Primary Election Early Voting period marked a significant achievement for the Office of the Supervisor of Elections, recording 7,113 voters' territory-wide. This represents an increase of 2,695 voters, or approximately 61%, when compared to the 2022 Primary Election Early Voting turnout of 4,418 voters. Participation increased across all districts, with St. Croix rising from 2,131 voters in 2022 to 3,461 in 2026, St. Thomas increasing from 2,182 to 3,444 voters, and St. John growing from 105 to 208 voters. These results demonstrate a substantial expansion in voter engagement and accessibility over the four-year period.

From a historical perspective, the 2026 Primary Election Early Voting turnout is the highest ever recorded for a primary election in the

Virgin Islands Elections System. Previous primary early voting participation totaled 831 voters in 2016, 3,521 in 2018, 1,829 in 2020, and 4,418 in 2022. The 2026 total of 7,113 voters surpassed the previous primary record set in 2022 by a considerable margin and reflects sustained growth in public confidence and utilization of early voting opportunities.

The record-breaking turnout highlights the effectiveness of the Elections System's investments in outreach initiatives, election administration, and voting accessibility. Achieving the highest primary early voting participation in the Territory's history demonstrates the value of continued funding for modern election operations, trained personnel, voter engagement programs, and technology enhancements. The 2026 results serve as evidence that strategic investments in election services directly contribute to increased civic participation, stronger voter access, and a more inclusive democratic process throughout the Virgin Islands.

Several factors contributed to the record-breaking increase in Early Voting participation during the 2026 Primary Election. Most notably, the election cycle featured a highly competitive slate of candidates that generated heightened public interest and engagement. Competitive races encouraged voters to become more informed and

588 motivated to participate in the electoral process, resulting in
589 significantly higher turnout than previous primary elections. The
590 increased level of candidate activity and voter outreach created
591 greater public awareness of the importance of participating in the
592 democratic process.

593 Another major contributor was the unprecedented involvement of
594 young people in the election process. More young candidates sought
595 public office, inspiring their peers to become engaged as voters,
596 campaign volunteers, and advocates for civic participation. Youth
597 involvement extended beyond the ballot box, as many young Virgin
598 Islanders actively worked on political campaigns, attended
599 community forums, and utilized social media platforms to encourage
600 voter participation. This level of engagement helped cultivate a new
601 generation of voters and contributed to the substantial increase in
602 early voting turnout.

603 The success of the 2026 Primary Election Early Voting period would
604 not have been possible without the extraordinary dedication and
605 professionalism of the Elections System staff and election officials.
606 For ten consecutive days, these individuals worked long hours from
607 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., ensuring that every voting center remained
608 fully operational, secure, and accessible to the voting public. Their

commitment to providing excellent customer service, maintaining the integrity of the electoral process, and assisting voters with patience and professionalism contributed significantly to the record-breaking turnout achieved during this election cycle.

Despite the demanding schedule, election personnel consistently demonstrated resilience, teamwork, and a steadfast commitment to public service. They managed voter check-in procedures, ballot issuance, technical operations, voter assistance, and compliance with election laws while maintaining a welcoming and efficient environment for thousands of electors. Their willingness to work extended hours over ten straight days reflects the dedication of a workforce committed to protecting one of our most fundamental democratic rights. The Office of the Supervisor of Elections is deeply grateful for their tireless efforts, which helped make the 2026 Primary Election Early Voting period one of the most successful and historic in the Territory's history.

2. The successful administration of August 1, 2026, Primary Election stands as another significant accomplishment for the Office of the Supervisor of Elections. Through careful planning, extensive training, and the dedication of election personnel, voting centers throughout the Territory operated safely, efficiently, and in full

compliance with election laws. Voters were provided with accessible opportunities to cast their ballots in a secure and orderly environment, reinforcing public trust and confidence in the electoral process. Building upon the momentum of the record-breaking Early Voting period, Election Day operations were executed seamlessly and reflected the Elections System's commitment to excellence in election administration.

A major measure of this success was the timely tabulation and reporting of election results. Through the coordinated efforts of election officials, poll workers, technical support personnel, Board members, and support agencies, unofficial results were obtained and made available prior to 9:00 p.m. on Election Night. The ability to deliver accurate and timely results demonstrated the effectiveness of election procedures, staff preparation, and technological resources, while maintaining the highest standards of transparency, accountability, and integrity throughout the process.

The Office of the Supervisor of Elections extends its sincere gratitude to the Elections System staff, election officials, Board of Elections members, law enforcement agencies, partner organizations, volunteers, and all stakeholders who contributed to the successful conduct of the 2026 Primary Election. Their professionalism,

dedication, and commitment to public service ensured that the election was conducted in a manner that was safe, efficient, accessible, and transparent for all voters. Their collective efforts not only protected the integrity of the democratic process but also strengthened public confidence in the Virgin Islands Elections System and its mission to serve the electorate with fairness and excellence.

3. Modernization of Voter Access

We have successfully advanced digital accessibility by expanding online voter services. Voters can now: Register online with ease. Update addresses and party affiliation digitally; Access a fully mobile-friendly platform. These enhancements have significantly reduced barriers to participation, improved data accuracy, and modernized the voter experience.

4. Professionalization of the Election Workforce

We have made substantial progress toward building a highly trained, year-round professional election workforce by: Expanding certification opportunities for election personnel; Implementing continuous training programs; Strengthening recruitment pipelines. This ensures operational consistency, institutional knowledge retention, and readiness across all election cycles.

5. Improved Voting Center Efficiency & Voter Experience

Through the implementation of precinct optimization strategies and Express Poll technology, we have: Reduced voter waits times; Applied data-driven polling site planning; Introduced real-time monitoring of voter flow; Enabled flexible staffing on Election Day. These improvements have enhanced efficiency, minimized congestion, and created a smoother voting experience.

6. Development of a Comprehensive Voter Information Portal

We have advanced plans for a centralized one-stop voter information platform providing: Registration status, Precinct location details, Sample ballots and Candidate information.

This initiative strengthens transparency and empowers voters with timely and accessible information.

7. Enhanced Election Coordination & Planning

We have improved coordination across election cycles through integrated planning for: Primary elections, General elections, Run Off elections and Special elections. This has reduced administrative strain, improved scheduling efficiency, and minimized voter confusion.

8. Increased Transparency Through Data & Reporting

We have strengthened transparency by developing tools for:

Real-time election results reporting, Turnout monitoring dashboards
Downloadable datasets and historical comparisons and Visual
statistical reporting (charts and graphs). These efforts promote
public trust through greater visibility and accountability.

This ensures broader inclusivity and equitable access for diverse
voter populations.

9. Following the completion of the Primary Election, the Board of
Elections authorized and conducted a targeted post-election audit as
part of its ongoing commitment to election integrity, transparency,
and accountability. The audit was designed to verify the accuracy of
election procedures, reconcile ballots and voting records, and confirm
that the reported results accurately reflected the votes cast by
electors. I wanted to include a direct quote from the Vice Chairman
and Chairman of the Education and Townhall Committee, Member
Kareem Francis “we have officially concluded the audit of early voting
and primary election day machines in both districts. Initial findings
show that the tapes from each contest matches those from the audit
tabulator machines and hand-count totals were only off by one or
two votes. Workers/volunteers in each district all agree that it’s more
than likely due to human error, on August 8, 2026.” The audit of the
Primary Election results successfully validated the accuracy of the

electronic voting machines, which matched the official results without discrepancy. Differences identified during the hand count were traced to inadvertent human errors in the manual tallying process. The findings reinforce the value of election audits as a verification tool while also demonstrating the challenges inherent in large-scale manual counting efforts.

At the same time, the audit highlights the importance of continued transparency and public accountability in the electoral process. Independent reviews and audits help maintain public confidence by verifying results, identifying areas for improvement, and ensuring that every aspect of election administration is subject to careful scrutiny. The results of this audit affirm both the reliability of the voting system and the commitment to openness and accuracy in conducting elections.

10. Successfully implemented the Absentee Ballot Portal for the 2026 Primary Election, improving accessibility and convenience for voters.

11. Leadership, Training, and Inter-National Engagement

Our commitment to excellence is reflected in: Completion of advanced election certifications; Participation in national and international conferences; These achievements position the Virgin Islands as a leader in election administration and innovation.

Goals:

Looking ahead, the Elections System is guided by a clear and strategic vision focused on modernization, accessibility, and public trust. Our goals are designed to build upon current progress while addressing the evolving needs of voters across the Territory.

1. Our foremost priority is to expand year-round civic engagement. With a sizable portion of registered voters currently inactive, we are committed to reaching underserved populations, including first-time voters and young residents, through sustained outreach and education initiatives. Increasing participation will require consistent engagement and accessible communication strategies.

2. We also aim to further modernize our technology infrastructure. This includes enhancing digital voter services, improving data integration, and expanding access to real-time voter information. These advancements will increase efficiency, improve accuracy, and provide voters with greater convenience and confidence in the system.

3. Another key priority is strengthening transparency and accountability. We are working toward implementing tools that allow voters to easily access election information, view results, and better

755 understand the process. Increased visibility will reinforce public trust
756 and demonstrate the integrity of the organization.

757 4. Plans are underway to develop a Judge's Portal for future election
758 cycles.

759 **Closing Statement**

760 I ask that you view this budget not as a cost, but as a commitment.

761 A commitment to ensuring that every eligible voter has the
762 opportunity to participate. A commitment to protecting the integrity
763 of every ballot cast. A commitment to maintaining a system that the
764 people of the Virgin Islands can trust.

765 While responsible fiscal management remains essential to supporting
766 government operations and public services, the successful
767 administration of elections continues to be one of the most essential
768 functions entrusted to our office.

769 The successful completion of the 2026 Primary Election reflects our
770 unwavering commitment to conducting a secure, accessible, and
771 transparent electoral process for all voters.

772 As we prepare for the 2026 General Election, Early Voting, Election
773 Day and a possible Run Off, these same principles of security,
774 transparency, and accessibility will continue to guide our efforts.

775 We encourage eligible voters to take advantage of all available voting
776 options and remain informed about important deadlines and election
777 information. Our commitment remains steadfast: to administer a
778 fair, secure, and accessible election process that upholds the
779 confidence of the voting public and protects the voice of every voter.

780 I would like to highlight a few items from the 2026 Elections Events
781 Calendar:

782 25-August - CASTING OF LOTS for position of names upon the
783 official election ballot at 5:30 p.m. – In Person in both Elections
784 Office,

785 2-September Conduct of the Primary Election Audit

786 8-September – First Day for receipt by the Supervisor of Elections of
787 applications for Absentee Ballots for The General Election.

788 19-September - All Federal ballots to be mailed out to Military and
789 Overseas personnel. MOVE Act OCT 2009

790 19-September - Territorial EXPO's – Pre-National Voter Registration
791 Day Event

792 22-September National Voter Registration Day Celebration
793 Nationwide

794 I will conclude with this quote from Former President Barack H.
795 Obama. "Democracy is not a spectator sport."

796 Thank you. We appreciate the opportunity and are prepared to
797 answer any questions you may have.