



Legislature of the Virgin Islands

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CHAIRMAN
Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports, & Parks

VICE-CHAIRMAN
Committee on Economic Development & Agriculture

MEMBER
Committee on Rules & Judiciary
Committee on Homeland Security, Justice & Public Safety
Committee on Housing, Transportation, & Telecommunication
Subcommittee on Energy & Infrastructure Development

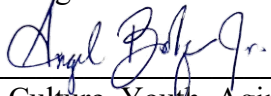
The Honorable
Angel Bolques, Jr.
Senator-At-Large
35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: **The Honorable Novelle E. Francis, Jr.**
President, 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

Ms. Kurell A. Sheridan, JD
Executive Director, 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

Amos W. Carty, Jr., Esq.
Chief Legal Counsel, 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

FROM: **Angel L. Bolques, Jr.** 
Chairman, Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports & Parks

DATE: September 7, 2023

RE: **AGENDA | Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports & Parks**
Hearing—Friday, August 25, 2023, at 10:00am

Pursuant to the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands Rule 605, the attached Committee Report is submitted for the Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports & Parks hearing held on **Friday, August 25, 2023**, at the **Fritz E. Lawaetz Legislative Chambers on the island of St. Croix**. The following represents all members, staff and testifiers in attendance, and the status of all agenda items.

Legislative Attendance

Committee Members & Attendance:

The Honorable Angel Bolques, Jr., **Chairman** -
The Honorable Marvin A. Blyden, **Vice-Chairman** -
The Honorable Samuel Carrion -
The Honorable Alma Francis Heyliger -
The Honorable Novelle Francis Jr -
The Honorable Franklin D. Johnson -
The Honorable Milton E. Potter -

Non-Committee Members in Attendance:

The Honorable Carla Joseph
The Honorable Diane T. Capehart
The Honorable Donna Frett-Gregory

Stenographers:

Security:

David Johnson

Sergeant of Arms:

Protocol Officer:

Myrna De-Altier-Pickard

Supervisor of Housekeeping:

Tashema Hutchinson

Office of Public Affairs:

Eustice Browne
Alwyn Baptiste, Jr.
Alvin Burke, Jr.
Melissa Gustave
Bernard Matthew, Sr.

Transportation:

George Weekes
Mario Robles

Legal Counsel:

Holly Fulkerson

Clerk:

Denisian Hodge

Timekeeper:

Denisian Hodge

Advisor to Committee Hearing:

Marcellino Ventura

Staff of Senator Angel Bolques, Jr.

Denisian Hodge
Ana Castillo
Langley Shazor

The Committee Hearing was called to order by Chairman Angel L. Bolques, Jr. at [Time] and convened to receive testimony on the following:

The Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports, and Parks has scheduled a hearing for **Friday, August 25, 2023, 10:00 AM** at the **Fritz E. Lawaetz Legislative Chambers on St. Croix** to receive testimony and updates regarding the status of horse racing in the territory. Bills 35-0073 & 35-0083 will also be presented to the Committee for consideration.

BLOCK I:

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

The committee will be receiving updates on the status of horse racing in the territory. This update will include, but not be limited to facilities construction, funding allocations, projected timelines, achievements, challenges, potential opportunities, and prevailing needs.

Invited Testifiers:

Honorable Calvert White
Commissioner, VI Sports, Parks, and Recreation

Robert E. Huckabee, III
President and CEO, Southland Gaming

Shaine Gaspard
Executive Vice President, Southland Gaming

Elroy Bates, Jr.
President, Flamboyant Park Horsemen Association

Hugo Hogde, Jr.
Chairman, USVI Horseracing Commission

Jason Williams
General Manager, Racing Operations, VIGL Operations, LLC

Andrew Dubuque
CFO/Managing Partner, VIGL Operations, LLC

Clinton Hedrington
President, St. Thomas Horsemen Association

Southland Gaming (SGVI) and VIGL gave updates on the facilities under construction in both districts. Concerns were raised by Senators over the lack of movement with VIGL. Horsemen

spoke candidly regarding the lack of communication with VIGL and voiced concerns over the cost of maintaining a horse while not being able to recoup investment for lack of races. Commissioner White of DSPR raised apprehension to release funds while no movement on the track in St. Croix was happening. Reiterated the fact that VIGL has resources to continue development, which was corroborated by VIGL, and holding the government appropriation would not delay construction.

BLOCK II:

1:00PM-3:00PM

The committee will be receiving testimony on following bills, presented for consideration by the Honorable Senator Samuel Carrion. *35-0073 An Act amending title 32 of the Virgin Islands Code to establish powers and duties for the horse racing commissions for each district and relating to antidoping of race horses to provide for regulation by district and joint horse racing commissions*

35-0083 An Act amending title 32 of the Virgin Islands Code, chapter 11, subchapter I, section 201 to establish separate horse racing commissions for each district

Invited Testifiers:

Honorable Calvert White
Commissioner, VI Sports, Parks, and Recreation

Elroy Bates, Jr.
President, Flamboyant Park Horsemen Association

Hugo Hogde, Jr.
Chairman, USVI Horseracing Commission

Clinton Hedrington
President, St. Thomas Horsemen Association

Betty Wilson
Former Member, USVI Horseracing Commission

Jay Watson
Former Member, USVI Horseracing Commission

Honorable Senator Samuel Carrion presented two measures for consideration. During his presentation, he mentioned that this would not create two horseracing commissions, but rather would give each district the autonomy to address issues unique to them. Both “divisions” would then come together to form a territory horseracing commission that would set rules, regulations, and standards for both districts to adhere to. Horsemen were in favor of this measure, and the current commission supported the decision and position of the horsemen. Senators agreed that it would help expedite the resurgence of horseracing in the territory.

The Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports & Parks was adjourned at 3:45PM

Roll call on Bill 35-0073

Members	Yes	No
Senator Marvin A. Blyden	X	
Senator Samuel Carrion	X	
Senator Alma Francis-Heyliger		X
Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr.	X	
Senator Franklin D. Johnson	X	
Senator Milton E. Potter	X	
Senator Angel L. Bolques, Jr.	X	

Roll call on Bill 35-0083

Members	Yes	No
Senator Marvin A. Blyden	X	
Senator Samuel Carrion	X	
Senator Alma Francis-Heyliger		X
Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr.	X	
Senator Franklin D. Johnson	X	
Senator Milton E. Potter	X	
Senator Angel L. Bolques, Jr.	X	