

# Legislature of the Virgin Islands

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The Honorable  
**Angel Bolques, Jr.**  
**Senator-At-Large**  
35<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the Virgin Islands

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

**VICE-CHAIRMAN**  
Committee on Economic Development & Agriculture

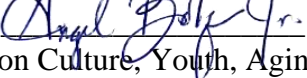
**MEMBER**  
Committee on Rules & Judiciary  
Committee on Homeland Security, Justice & Public Safety  
Committee on Housing, Transportation, & Telecommunication  
Committee on Housing, Transportation, & Telecommunication  
Subcommittee on Energy & Infrastructure Development

## 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:** October 25, 2023

**RE:** **AGENDA | Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports & Parks**  
**Hearing—October 5, 2023**

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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 October 5, 2023, at the Fritz E. Lawaetz Legislative Chambers on 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 - Present**  
The Honorable Marvin A. Blyden, **Vice-Chairman - Present**  
The Honorable Samuel Carrion - Present  
The Honorable Alma Francis Heyliger - Present  
The Honorable Novelle Francis Jr. - Present  
The Honorable Franklin D. Johnson - Present  
The Honorable Milton E. Potter - Present

#### Non-Committee Members in Attendance:

The Honorable Carla Joseph- Present

**Stenographers:**

Vashti O. Gerald-Berry

**Security:**

David Johnson

Othni Edney

**Sergeant of Arms:**

Shani Smith (STT)

Sherleen Francis (STX)

**Protocol Officer:**

Myrna Pickard

**Supervisor of Housekeeping:**

Tashema Hutchinson

**Office of Public Affairs:**

Eustace Browne

Alwyn Baptiste, Jr.

**Transportation:**

Alvina Jean-Marie

Dimitrious Jefferson

Mario Robles

George Weekes

**Legal Counsel:**

N/A

**Clerk:**

Denisian Hodge

**Timekeeper:**

Denisian Hodge

**Advisor to Committee Hearing:**

Denisian Hodge

**Available Staff of Senator Angel Bolques, Jr.**

Denisian Hodge

**The Committee Hearing was called to order by Chairman Angel L. Bolques, Jr. at 10:30 a.m. and convened to receive testimony on the following:**

The Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports, and Parks has scheduled a hearing for **Thursday, October 5, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.** at the **Fritz E. Lawaetz Legislative Chambers on St. Croix** to receive testimony and updates regarding the 175th Emancipation Commemoration Committee and the Virgin Islands Puerto Rico Friendship Committee.

**BLOCK I:**

**10:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.**

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During this Block of the hearing, the Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports & Parks delved into the activities of the 175th Emancipation Commemoration Committee (ECC) with utmost attention to detail. The ECC presented its annual report on the Emancipation celebration, an event of great cultural and historical importance in the Virgin Islands.

The Committee's presentation included a comprehensive overview of this year's Emancipation celebration, highlighting notable successes, challenges encountered, improvements made over the past year, and a thorough breakdown of the budget, including expenditures. The aim was to provide the legislative body and the public with a transparent account of how financial resources were allocated to support the celebration, demonstrating fiscal responsibility.

Moreover, the hearing explored the ongoing archival and digitization projects led by the ECC. These projects play a pivotal role in preserving the historical and cultural heritage of the Virgin Islands, ensuring that future generations have access to valuable records and information. The ECC provided insights into their current initiatives and the progress made in this regard, demonstrating their commitment to preserving the region's history.

The hearing also addressed the plans for the remainder of the year, with a focus on seeking stakeholder input and fostering collaboration to enhance the Emancipation Celebration further. The Committee actively engaged with the ECC to discuss strategies for expanding the reach and impact of the celebration and for raising awareness of its historical significance among the community.

**Invited Testifiers:**

The Honorable Carol Burke - Chairwoman, 175th Emancipation Commemoration Committee: As the head of the ECC, Carol Burke shared her insights, experiences, and achievements related to the Emancipation celebration. She provided a firsthand account of the Committee's activities and its role in preserving and promoting the cultural legacy of the Virgin Islands.

The Honorable Myron Jackson - Former Senator & Board Member: Myron Jackson, a former senator and board member, offered a unique perspective on the Emancipation celebration. His testimony shed light on the historical context and significance of this event, drawing on his extensive experience in public service and cultural preservation and the importance of digitization.

In addition to these testimonies, the Committee also shared a favorable video presentation from the 175th Commemoration Committee. This visual representation allowed the public to witness the vibrant activities and historical commemorations that took place during the Emancipation celebration, creating a powerful and engaging way to share the spirit of the event.

The Committee also received a favorable video of the 175<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Committee to brief the public on activities during the celebration.

## **BLOCK II:**

**1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.**

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The second Block of the Committee Hearing celebrated the Virgin Islands & Puerto Rico Friendship Day, emphasizing the strong and enduring relationship between these two regions. The focus of this segment was to provide a deep and meaningful understanding of the significance of this friendship.

This part of the hearing featured special presentations that highlighted the historical, cultural, and social ties that bind the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico together. These presentations not only showcased the importance of this friendship but also underlined the shared values and experiences that unite the two regions.

In addition to the special presentations, the Committee received a comprehensive overview from the Virgin Islands Puerto Rico Friendship Committee. This comprehensive report outlined the activities, achievements, challenges, and specific needs identified by the Committee, which plays a pivotal role in fostering and maintaining the friendship between the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

### **Invited Testifiers:**

The Honorable Jose Corcino - Mayor, Island of Vieques, Puerto Rico: Mayor Corcino shared insights into the perspectives and experiences from the Puerto Rican side of this special friendship. His testimony emphasized

the importance of cross-cultural exchange and the unique bonds that exist between the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

The Honorable Sammuell Sanes - Former Senator & St. Croix Administrator: Sammuell Sanes, a former senator and St. Croix Administrator, offered a local perspective on the Virgin Islands' side of the friendship. His testimony highlighted the benefits and mutual support that result from this enduring connection.

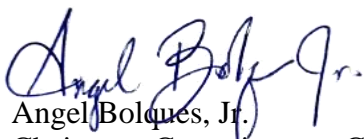
The Honorable Luis Torres - Chairman, Virgin Islands Puerto Rico Friendship Committee: As the Chairman of the Virgin Islands Puerto Rico Friendship Committee, Luis Torres provided an in-depth look at the Committee's activities and its role in nurturing the relationship between the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

The session aimed to foster a profound understanding of the Committee's efforts in maintaining and strengthening this vital friendship, which plays a crucial role in the cultural, social, and economic fabric of both regions. It served as a platform for celebrating the shared history and future collaborations between the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

The Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports & Parks convened in the Fritz E. Lawaetz Legislative Chambers on St. Croix with an overview that will encompass the VIPR committee's activities, achievements, challenges or obstacles encountered, and the specific needs it has identified. The hearing aimed to provide a platform for a thorough understanding of the Committee's role in fostering and maintaining this friendship.

**The Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports & Parks was adjourned at 3:00 P.M..**

Respectfully submitted by,



Angel Bolques, Jr.  
Chairman, Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports & Parks  
Senator-At-Large  
35<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the Virgin Islands

Cc: All Employees