

Liburd Zoom Presentation

Good Morning/Afternoon to the Committee on Government Operations, Veteran Affairs and Consumer Protection, Madam Chairwoman, Senators, the listening audience and all others:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Bill No 35-0074 commemorating my former colleague and friend Senator Almando “Rocky: Liburd. It is an honor to do so. I have known Senator and friend “Rocky” for some _____ years. We have served on committees, on opposite side of the isles and in other capacities for many, many years. We have had numerous discussions, both heated and otherwise on many issues. So, I would say that I’ve come to know him pretty well and offer my few words without reservation. Like every professional and personal relationship, we’ve not always agreed on many things, we may not have the same views on every matter or reached consensus, but we have always done what we felt was in the very best interest of all Virgin Islanders in our capacity as public servants in leadership positions in the Legislature. I’m sure he would agree that we’ve learned along the way that at the end of the day what mattered most was how to achieve decisions that was best on behalf of our constituencies and the entire community.

I think what held steadfast and true for Rocky, was/is his desire to improve the quality of life for his constituents on St. John and for all Virgin Islanders. I know that he strived in countless ways to bring far reaching positive policies and legislation to ensure positive sustaining change. Across the board, through every government channel, every government agency and government operations, he brought forward legislation, or added to the conversation positive advice on ways to improve the economy, education, health services, WAPA, disaster management, culture, and other ways.

His arguments on the Legislative floor were fervent, compelling and challenging colleagues to reach common ground on a multitude of issues. His style was quiet, colloquial - he would often render an analogy, a local story, personal reference or

storytelling to persuade colleagues on the passage of legislation. But he did so with respect for his colleagues' point of view and their arguments. For example, in numerous instances, Rocky was the catalyst, or was the final arbiter in breaking the tie amongst senators in reaching a vote on District divides holding up movement on the passage of legislation.

St. John was first and foremost on his mind. He fought for St. John. He was passionate and unrelenting in his commitment and support for his constituents on St. John. He was strategic, astute, measured and purposeful in his representation of his constituents. St. John in my estimation had no better advocate!

Rocky and I shared and sponsored several pieces of legislation that were successful in being enacted. A few notable were the Internet Gaming legislation and the Education Commission of States (A bill I crafted to improve the quality of Education in the VI), amongst others. His actions and the manner of the man he is reminds me of a particular Martin Luther quote: ***“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”*** This quote is especially suited to Rocky and says it all. Rocky is moreover courageous legislator. He was forthcoming in his beliefs and positions, not afraid to take a stand. Always putting the person and situation above the “politics.”

In closing, I would like to congratulate Senator Liburd and hope he continues to keep doing good on behalf of the Virgin Islands. I wish him long life and many more accolades. Thank You Senators.