



Legislature Of The Virgin Islands

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THE HONORABLE
Carla J. Joseph
LEGISLATIVE SECRETARY
35TH LEGISLATURE OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

CHAIR

Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs,
and Consumer Protection


*Liaison to the United States Department of Interior and
Office of Insular Affairs*

MEMBER

Committee of the Whole
Committee on Rules and Judiciary
Committee on Education and Workforce Development
Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure, and Planning
Committee on Housing, Transportation, and Telecommunications

Memorandum: 23-035

TO: Mrs. Kurell A. Sheridan, JD
Executive Director
35th Legislature of the V.I.

FROM: The Honorable Carla J. Joseph 
Chair
Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs,
and Consumer Protection

DATE: December 20, 2023

SUBJECT: Committee Report for Monday, December 18, 2023 Meeting

Please find attached the report for the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs,
and Consumer Protection (GOVACP) meeting held on Monday, December 18, 2023 in the
Frits E. Lawaetz Legislative Conference Room, St. Croix.

Cc: All Senators
Chief Legal Counsel
Archive Division
Journal Division

**GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND CONSUMER
PROTECTION
DECEMBER 18, 2023 COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT**

The Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection held its meeting on Monday, December 18, 2023, at the Frits E. Lawaetz Legislative Conference Room on St. Croix. The Committee received testimony and considered the following bills:

- Bill No. 35-0116 – A Resolution honoring and commending Lieutenant Colonel Leayle Gerard Galiber for his leadership in the Virgin Islands National Guard and his dedication to his country and to the people of the Virgin Islands. This bill is sponsored by Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr.,
- Bill No. 35-0058 – An Act amending title 29 Virgin Islands Code, by adding a chapter 25 to enact The Public-Private Partnership Agreement Act. This bill is sponsored by Senator Marise C. James.

Then the Committee received testimony on the operations of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission.

The meeting was called to order by the Committee Chair, Sen. Carla J. Joseph at 10:02 a.m.

Committee Members Present

Sen. Carla J. Joseph, Chair
Sen. Javan E. James, Sr. Vice Chair
Sen. Samuel Carrion
Sen. Ray Fonseca
Sen. Alma Francis Heyliger
Sen. Kenneth Gittens
Sen. Milton E. Potter

Public Affairs/Media

Mr. Omari Hicks
Mr. Kashief Hamilton
Mr. Barry Leerdam
Mr. Jamal Potter
Ms. Diane Cruz
Mr. Bernard Matthew, Sr.
Mr. Alwyn Baptiste, Jr.
Mr. Alvin Burke, Jr.

Office of the Executive Director

Rev. Charles Brown, Jr.
Ms. Myrna De-Altier-Pickard

Non-Committee Members Present

Sen. Marvin A. Blyden
Sen. Novelle E. Francis, Jr.
Sen. Marise C. James

Legislative Reporters

Ms. Tricia Sealey
Ms. Vashti Berry

Sergeant-At-Arms

Mr. Delvin Fleming
Mr. Okang Dover
Mr. Dequan Bondicumaitre

Clerk/Timekeeper

Ms. Delekeh Callwood

Legal Counsel

Attorney LaVerne Mills-Williams

In block one of the meeting, Bill No. 35-0116 was introduced by Sen. Novelle E. Francis, Jr. LTC Dante P. Galiber, MD, FACC, Retired; LTC Bereford Edwards, Retired testified in support of the bill. Major General Kodjo S. Knox-Limbacker, Adjutant General of the Virgin Islands National Guard, and The Honorable Gregory Francis, Former Lt. Governor testimonies were read into the record. Senators proceeded with one (1) round of three (3) minutes each of questioning. Senator Gittens made a motion to move Amendment No. 35-588 to Bill No. 35-0116. The motion was seconded by Senator Carrion. The motion was carried. Senator Carrion made a motion to waive the reading of the amendment. The motion was seconded by Senator Gittens. The motion was carried. Senator Gittens made a motion for Bill No. 35-0116 as amended to be approved and forwarded to the Rules and Judiciary Committee for further consideration. The motion was seconded by Senators Carrion and James. Voting in favor were Senators Carrion, Fonseca, Francis Heyliger, Gittens, James, Sr., Joseph, and Potter. The motion was carried.

In block two of the meeting, Bill No. 35-0058 was introduced by Sen. Marise C. James. Honorable Derek A. Gabriel, Commissioner of the Department of Public Work; Mr. Carlton Dowe, Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Port Authority; Mr. Wayne Biggs, CEO for the Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority; Attorney Magdalene A. Morancie, Chief Legal Counsel of the Department of Property and Procurement; Mr. Kemo Smith, Deputy Commissioner for Fiscal and Administrative Services of the Virgin Islands Department of Education and Dr. Stephanie Berry, Chief Operation Officer of the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority testified on the bill. Senators proceeded with one (1) round of four (4) minutes each of questioning. Senator Carrion made a motion for Bill No. 35-0058 to be approved and forwarded to the Rules and Judiciary Committee for further consideration. The motion was seconded by Senator Potter. Voting in favor were Senators Carrion, Fonseca, Francis Heyliger, Gittens, Joseph, and Potter. The motion was carried.

In the final block of the meeting, Executive Director Vernice Gumbs of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission and Chairwoman Loretta Lloyd of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission Board testified on the operations to include but not limited to enabling law and jurisdiction, current agency's challenges, and plan of action to resolve challenges. Senators were allotted one (1) of four (4) minutes each of questioning. Executive Director Gumbs stated that employees are not equipped with the resources to work remotely. The Commission requested funding for ten positions which included five existing positions and five vacant positions. The Legislature appropriated the sum of \$650,383.00 to fund the filled positions. Additionally, the Commission hopes to launch an electronic management storage system that would fully automate its internal processes. Chairwoman Lloyd stated that the agency lacked technological infrastructure and that quotes to create a proper website were received from three companies. The agency has been unable to proceed with the upgrades due to lack of funding.

The Chair, Sen. Carla J. Joseph, adjourned the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection meeting at 5:12 p.m.