

TESTIMONY

Presented By: Jones, Doyle
ST. THOMAS CRICKET ASSOCIATION

Good morning, Senator Carla Joseph, Chairwoman of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection; other committee members present; testifiers; and the listening and viewing audiences. I am Doyle Jones, President of the St. Thomas Cricket Association (STCA), and I am accompanied by Calvert Gibson, Sergeant of Arms of the STCA and Leeward Island Cricket Board Director. I am pleased to provide testimony in support of Bill No. 35-0006, an act honoring and commending former Senator George E. Goodwin for his many years of expansive contributions to the Virgin Islands and the community.

Mr. Goodwin served and made substantial contributions to the sport of cricket not only in the St. Thomas/St. John district but throughout the territory. He proudly served as the President and Secretary of the St. Thomas Cricket Association and as President of the Combined Virgin Islands Cricket Association. In his quest to promote and develop the game in our region, he organized the travel of numerous teams from the Eastern Caribbean and retired international cricketers to St. Thomas to play. He contributed to the development of our players by organizing clinics and training sessions to advance players' techniques. In 1985, he led the Virgin Islands delegation to Antigua, where he advocated and convinced the Leeward Islands Cricket Board that the Virgin Islands should be recognized as a full member. His advocacy afforded the Virgin Islands Cricket Board the opportunity to have a seat at the table setting policy for cricket in the Leeward Islands region and provided our cricketers the opportunity to participate and showcase their talent in organized tournaments. As a senator, he appropriated funding to make sure that the sport's long-term viability remained a top priority. Former Senator George Goodwin's sponsorship of Regional and International cricket games provided an opportunity for cricket lovers in the Virgin Islands to enjoy first-class and international cricket games on local television.

While former Senator Goodwin enjoyed cricket, the love he demonstrated for people is something to make specific note of. On and off the field, he remained at the crease, batting for individuals and finding solutions to their problems. He assisted a host of Eastern Caribbean residents who encountered problems in the islands. He was very instrumental in aiding all Caribbean people living in the Virgin Islands from the early 1960s to the early 1990s who needed assistance securing a bond or an extended stay from the Immigration Services. Whether it was through the Alien Interest Movement or through the kindness of his heart, his office work exhibited and embodied the man of the people.

The STCA is in favor of the legislation naming the field in honor of a pioneer of the sport. I would be remiss if I failed to emphasize the effort that needs to be done to ensure that we honor a man who has made a tremendous contribution to the sport in the territory. With the help of the Governor, Executive Director Dowe, and Commissioner White, we have painstakingly worked to get the grounds in Estate Nazareth ready for play, but work remains. The most immediate need is topsoil. Identifying 60 truckloads of topsoil and having the funding available to purchase the topsoil and finish the field's final grading is vital. Moreover, since the current revocable license agreement has come to an end, it is critical to enter into a long-term lease or revocable agreement with the Virgin Islands government.

The STCA pledged to make sure the work that Mr. Goodwin started is completed. We will work to see that a facility capable of hosting first-class matches is built. We will work to make sure that we establish a solid youth program to ensure that the game remains viable in our region. The work of the association will not be complete until we ensure we properly recognize a man who has supported and contributed to the people of this great territory.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on bill no. 35-0006. As a man of the people and a man of proven dedication to the game of cricket, we can think of no one more deserving of this honor. The cricket community and I support the measure naming the field George E. Goodwin Cricket Grounds; Mr. Gibson and I remain available to answer any question you or any other committee member may have.