

Good morning, Chairwoman Carla Joseph, Members of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans' affair and Consumer Protection, other Senators present, Legislative Staff, fellow testifiers, guests, and the viewing and listening audience.

My name is Renee McAlpin-Petersen. I am the St. Croix District Chair for the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands. It is indeed an honor for me to give testimony in support of BILL No 35-0029. An act honoring and commending Donna Marie Christian-Christensen, MD for her tireless contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands in the medical field and representation in the United States Congress.

As a child growing up on the island of St. Croix, Dr. Christian was a household name. She was the doctor for many to include my family, the McAlpins. My father, the late Charles H. A. McAlpin was one of Dr. Christensen's very close friends, who encouraged her to enter the race for Delegate. It was during the campaign while canvassing in the different Housing Communities with the late members of Dr. Christensen's canvassing team like the late: Wadesworth Dickerson, aka "Ladee"; Carmen Gonzalez, Daryl Moorhead, Charles H. A. McAlpin, Tony Felix, and Arturo Roebuck, we discovered the impact Dr. Christensen made on the lives of the residents on St. Croix during her medical practice. We even found out that Dr. Christensen made house visits especially to those who did not have transportation or access to public transportation. This indeed was impeccable dedication to our community. I remember all too well while canvassing a

senior citizen asked her, “If you won for Delegate, who will be my doctor?” This was a major concern for her patients because they believed and trusted her. Even though Dr. Christensen was unsuccessful in her first attempt to Congress, she remained steadfast in her efforts to improve the lives of the People of the Virgin Islands.

In her second run to Congress in 1996, Dr. Christensen won becoming the first female Physician in Congress. She took that same caring and compassionate concerns for her patients to Congress. As a Democrat, she was able to foster professional working relationships across the aisle. She has championed many legislations benefiting the US Mainland and US Territories. She has served us well for 19years in Congress.

Even though Dr. Christensen has retired, she remains active politically in the Virgin Islands Democratic Party and relevant on medical issues. She played a vital role working alongside the Honorable Justa Encarnacion, Commissioner for the Department of Health throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. Then in June of this year, Dr. Christensen launched the first non-profit Health and Empowerment Initiative in Estate Bethlehem Village and Profit Hills. This will not only help families living in that area achieve their best health; but it also will support them in the things they need to make their community a better place to live.

If one juxtaposes Dr. Christensen’s political career with her medical career, the common denominator that exists between

both careers is COMPASSION. Thus, Dr. Christensen has led with compassion in all her endeavors.

As Oprah Winfrey said, “Leadership is about empathy. It’s about having the ability to relate to and connect with people for the purpose of inspiring and empowering lives.” Dr. Christensen has definitely inspired and empowered many Virgin Islanders.

I would like to personally thank her entire family circle, especially her two daughters: Rabiah Green-George and Karida Green for sharing your mother with us for all these years. She would not have been able to make these great accomplishments without your love and support. I believe this is the first time we are recognizing Dr. Christensen. I am a firm believer in giving people their flowers while they are alive and well. Lastly, I would like to thank the Bill Sponsors: Senators Novelle E. Francis, Jr. and Angel L. Bolques, Jr. for taking the lead in this recognition; and I encourage all others to sign-on on this Bill. This concludes my testimony and thank you again for the opportunity.