

Written testimony of Shelley M. Thomas

Submitted to the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and
Consumer Protection

Chair: The Honorable Carla Joseph

Re: Bill No. 35-0029: An Act honoring and commending Donna Marie
Christian-Christensen, M.D., for her tireless contributions to the people of the Virgin
Islands in the medical field and representation in the United States Congress.

Madame Chair, members of the Committee, testifiers, audience and radio and tv
listeners.

First, I would like to thank the Honorable Senators, Novelle E. Francis, Jr., Angel L.
Bolques, Jr. and Carla Joseph for finally recognizing and acknowledging Donna for all
she has done and continue to do, to make us a better community.

I will leave her professional resume' for the other testifiers to highlight. My focus will be
our personal relationship.

I first met Donna in her grandmother's living room, when we were both little children.
She was a little older than I, but was very reserved in interacting with me. At the time, I
knew we were related, but like most Virgin Islands households, there was never any
explanation about how that connection came about.

As the years passed, we would see each other on occasions, but it was only upon her
return to St. Croix to practice medicine, that our relationship grew. She evolved from a
child that barely spoke to me, to a professional, willing to sacrifice her comfort for
others.

Today, I am proud to say that I know how we are related. I know of her commitment and
dedication; of her compassion and service before self; her willingness to listen; her
ability to forgive and to look beyond her comfort level; her conviction to never give up
and to love her Virgin Islands people. Those are all attributes to be admired and to
strive for.

Congratulations to you, Donna, my cousin, as I channel my mother, Gloria Gibbs Thomas Bell, on behalf of the Pedro family, you absolutely deserve this honor.