

**Good day, Honorable Carla J. Joseph Chairperson of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs and Consumer Protection, and to those viewing and listening.**

**I am Shawn-Michael Malone, a retired Member of the Virgin Islands Legislature and Primary Sponsor and Primary Co-Sponsor of several Acts that have heightened and celebrated our self-awareness as Virgin Islanders. Among those measures is Quelbe as our official Music, Quadrille as our official Dance, March as Virgin Islands History Month, and the creation of the Division of Cultural Education within our Virgin Islands Department of Education.**

**Each of these legislative proposals, which are now Acts that are being enacted and observed on a regular basis sought to not only educate our population about the significance they represent in our development as a people and Territory, but they were also proposed primarily to instill and nurture a strong sense of “national” pride that will serve as a necessary foundation for our continued social, political, and economic development.**

**Today, I am pleased to support yet another legislative initiative that, in my humble opinion, will add to our collective responsibility in building more self-awareness, Virgin Islands pride, and most importantly, a legacy for future and unborn generations of Virgin Islanders.**

**Bill number 35-0075 sponsored by Senator Angel Bolques to name the 3rd Monday in February Governor’s Day will be a constant and important reminder to all inhabitants of the Virgin Islands of who our appointed and elected Governors, their contributions to the political, social and economic development of the Virgin Islands and as an added benefit, inspire current and future generations to consider this honorable and noble call to service perhaps with more preparation and dedication. It will also help us to better understand the direction these men have taken and serve as a guide to avoid and/or build upon their contributions in how we prepare for the future.**

**The fact that this bill proposes to establish Governor’s Day during the same day our Nation observes President’s Day without any significant additional cost, just with the exception of the luncheon each sitting Governor shall conduct in its**

**observance, makes this gesture in strengthening Virgin Islands pride, identity, and an awareness worthwhile and should be supported.**

**How many Virgin Islanders today can recite and share knowledge of the names and contributions of past Governors? I think we all know the answer to that question. Therefore, I recommend that the proposed bill be amended to add another section directing our Joint Boards of Education to develop curricular in our Virgin Islands History genre to ensure our students learn about our past and current Chief executives. Additionally, besides the pictorial history of our Governors seen at the Government House in both Districts, the bill should also include a provision for a publication of all appointed and elected Governors that should be written and compiled by the University of the Virgin Islands and that such publication be available in both print and electronic formats in all libraries throughout the Territory. As a people, we must get into the habit of documenting our history and ensuring its proliferation throughout our society.**

**It is my strong belief that in each sitting legislature, measures like thus celebrating our people, culture, and history should be a part of the Legislative Agenda and recorded as much as necessary. As we become even more diverse as a society is more the reason for us to document and celebrate those people, things, and events that laid the foundation of who and what we are today. As we can all see when we fail to do these things, we lose our sense of purpose and direction simply because we did not, and I shall go out on a limb to say, failed to treat our past on many levels and areas with reverence. The “proof is in the pudding” in terms of our inability to adopt a constitution, select an appropriate political status and be the drivers of our economy, just to name a few.**

**Therefore, while some may tend to regard measures like this as “feel good” or insignificant, I would highly suggest to those persons to rethink their perspective and to see how this proposal and similar ones are critical in the foundations for societies to thrive collectively. And in our case here in the Virgin Islands, one nation-building legislative proposal at a time!**

**Thank you for the opportunity to appear before all of you today and I am prepared to respond to any questions you may have based on my testimony.**