

Ladies and gentlemen, honorable members of the 35th Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands, and all those joining us today, whether virtually or in person.

We have gathered here today at the invitation of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection to discuss Bill No. 35-0091, a resolution honoring and commending Aliyah Boston for her remarkable achievements in girls' and women's basketball. Her contributions as an ambassador for the Territory and to women's sports worldwide have earned her this well-deserved recognition.

Before I proceed, let us take a moment to give thanks and praise to God for the blessings and favor that have been bestowed upon Aliyah and our family. We acknowledge that God deserves all the honor and glory for the incredible journey He has set us on.

While the proposed bill highlights Aliyah's numerous accomplishments on the court and in the classroom, there are aspects of her life that go beyond what you see during her games. These qualities make her truly worthy of this honor.

First and foremost, Aliyah understands and embraces her heritage. She recognizes that she is a child of God, and she accepts the responsibilities that

come with that identity. One such responsibility is honoring her parents. Even at the age of 21, with a resume that rivals those much older, she seeks our guidance and advice, and she genuinely takes it to heart. She understands the biblical principle that comes with honoring her parents: the promise of long days in the land of the living.

Aliyah is not just a basketball star; she is a remarkable daughter, granddaughter, sister, niece, cousin, and friend. Her love and affection for people are unmatched, regardless of their status, title, or position in life. She sees the best in people and treats her neighbors with the same kindness and respect that she affords herself.

Aliyah's closest friends in high school were not superstar athletes but ordinary students. She studied, laughed, and enjoyed her free time with them, demonstrating her genuine care for others.

Furthermore, Aliyah has a deep love for her community and a strong desire to make a positive impact on the youth of the Virgin Islands. She hosted her first camp last year and, while sitting among the observing parents from St. Croix and St. Thomas, she listened to their thoughts about sports in the territory. As the camp continued, she came over to me and humorously said, "Mom, how much do

you think it would cost me to have an AAU team of girls from here, not just St. Thomas, but the entire Virgin Islands?" Before I could respond, she continued, "because listening to these parents, It's like I'm in a therapy session." All I could do was laugh.

I want to emphasize to parents, employers, legislative members, and government officials that we must invest in our children. Our future lies in their hands, and they are the most valuable investment we can make. Our jobs won't fall apart if we take an hour or two to attend PTAs, watch our children's games and performances, and provide them with our love, time, resources, and knowledge. We have to prioritize providing them with tools they need for success.

Let us inspire our youth to dream big, to speak life into their aspirations, and to believe that their dreams can become reality. Mentorship programs play a crucial role in guiding children to trust God, dream big and work hard.

As we recognize Aliyah's achievements, may her journey inspire us to believe that even from a 32-square-mile island, with faith in God, hard work, and dedication, anything is possible.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts and insights.

Al and Cleone Boston

