



Legislature Of The Virgin Islands

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THE HONORABLE
Carla J. Joseph
LEGISLATIVE SECRETARY
35TH LEGISLATURE OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

CHAIR

Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs,
and Consumer Protection


*Liaison to the United States Department of Interior and
Office of Insular Affairs*

MEMBER

Committee of the Whole
Committee on Rules and Judiciary
Committee on Education and Workforce Development
Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure, and Planning
Committee on Housing, Transportation, and Telecommunications

Memorandum: 24-004

TO: Mrs. Kurell A. Sheridan, JD
Executive Director
35th Legislature of the V.I.

FROM: The Honorable Carla J. Joseph 
Chair
Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs,
and Consumer Protection

DATE: February 29, 2024

SUBJECT: Committee Report for Tuesday, February 27, 2024 Meeting

Please find attached the report for the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs,
and Consumer Protection (GOVACP) meeting held on Tuesday, February 27, 2024 in the Earle
B. Ottley Legislative Hall, St. Thomas.

Cc: All Senators
Chief Legal Counsel
Archive Division
Journal Division

**GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND CONSUMER
PROTECTION
FEBRUARY 27, 2024 COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT**

The Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection held its meeting on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, at the Earle B. Ottley Legislative Hall on St. Thomas. The Committee received testimony and considered the following bills:

- Bill No. 35-0223 – An Act renaming a portion of Gamle Gade “William A. Industrious Street. This bill is sponsored by Senator Carla J. Joseph,
- Bill No. 35-0226 – An Act amending title 16 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 13, subchapter I, section 345, subsection (c) by requiring the minimum child support amount to be \$100 per month. This bill is sponsored by Senator Carla J. Joseph, and
- Bill No. 35-0107 - An Act posthumously honoring and commending Ms. Fenella Cooper for her contributions to the fields of education, sports, and culture, and naming the UVI tennis courts in her honor. This bill is sponsored by Senator Marvin A. Blyden.

The meeting was called to order by the Committee Chair, Sen. Carla J. Joseph at 11:31 a.m.

Committee Members Present

Sen. Carla J. Joseph, Chair
Sen. Javan E. James, Sr., Vice Chair
Sen. Samuel Carrion
Sen. Ray Fonseca
Sen. Alma Francis Heyliger
Sen. Kenneth L. Gittens
Sen. Milton E. Potter

Public Affairs/Media

Mr. Omari Hicks
Mr. Kashief Hamilton
Mr. Barry Leerdam
Mr. Jamal Potter
Mr. Bernard Matthew, Sr.
Mr. Alwyn Baptiste, Jr.
Mr. Alvin Burke, Jr.
Mr. Eustace Browne
Ms. Africah Harrigan
Ms. Chaunte Herbert
Mr. Dequan Milliner

Office of the Executive Director

Mr. Charles Brown, Jr.

Legal Counsel

Attorney Nandi Sekou

Non-Committee Members Present

Sen. Donna A. Frett-Gregory
Sen. Novelle E. Francis, Jr.
Sen. Marvin A. Blyden
Sen. Diane T. Capehart

Legislative Reporters

Ms. Joanne Samuel
Ms. Nadine Williams
Ms. Tricia Sealey
Ms. Vashti Berry
Ms. Nataya Melchoir-Munoz

Sergeant-At-Arms

Ms. Shani Smith
Mr. Delvin Fleming
Mr. Terrance Manning
Mr. Yahya Daniel

Clerk/Timekeeper

Ms. Donna Freeman
Ms. Normally Joseph
Ms. Myrna De-Altier-Pickard

Supporting Staff

Ms. Knysha Berkeley
Mr. Trecquan Richardson (Intern)

In block one of the meeting, Bill No. 35-0223 was introduced by Sen. Carla J. Joseph. Pastor Angela Rawlins, and Dr. Andre'a Dorsey testified in support of the bill. The Honorable Roosevelt C. David, Former Senator; Honorable Lisa Alejandro, Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement; Dr. Josette Rey; and Dr. Rey-Sutton testimonies were read into the record in support of the bill. Senators proceeded with one (1) round of three (3) minutes each of questioning. Senator Joseph made a motion for Bill No. 35-0223 to be approved and forwarded to the Rules and Judiciary Committee for further consideration. The motion was seconded by Senators Gittens, Potter, Fonseca, and Francis Heyliger. Voting in favor were Senators Carrion, Fonseca, Francis Heyliger, Gittens, James, Joseph, and Potter. The motion was carried.

In block two of the meeting, Bill No. 35-0226 was introduced by Sen. Carla J. Joseph. Mr. Ian Clement, Deputy Attorney General of the Attorney General Office, and Ms. Kathryn Jensen-deLugo, IV Program Director, of Paternity and Child Support Division Program of the Virgin Islands Department of Justice testified in support of the bill. Jensen deLugo stated that the measure was the most meaningful paternity and child support legislation in recent times. Jensen-deLugo also stated there has been an increase in the number of persons failing to appear for hearings and failing to present the requested financial information, regardless of being properly and timely served as well as notified. Senators proceeded with one (1) round of five (5) minutes each of questioning. Senator Joseph made a motion to move Amendment No. 35-661 to Bill No. 35-0226. The motion was seconded by Senators Gittens and Heyliger. The motion was carried. Senator Joseph made a motion for Bill No. 35-0226 as amended to be approved and forwarded to the Rules and Judiciary Committee for further consideration. The motion was seconded by Senators Gittens, Fonseca, and Francis Heyliger. Voting in favor were Senators Carrion, Fonseca, Francis Heyliger, Gittens, and Joseph. The motion was carried based on a majority vote. Senators James and Potter voted against the motion.

In the final block of the meeting, Bill No. 35-0107 was introduced by Sen. Marvin A. Blyden. Dr. Sharon Charles, Dr. David Hall, Mr. Gerald Walters, and Dr. George Newton testified in support of the bill. Dr. Nicole Craigwell-Syms whose testimony was read into the record also in support of the bill. Senators proceeded with one (1) round of three (3) minutes each of questioning. Senator Potter made a motion for Bill No. 35-0107 to be approved and forwarded to the Rules and Judiciary Committee for further consideration. The motion was seconded by Senators Carrion, Fonseca, and Francis Heyliger. Voting in favor were Senators Carrion, Fonseca, Francis Heyliger, Gittens, James, Joseph, and Potter. The motion was carried.

During the meeting, a request for additional information was made through the chair. The information is as follows:

- Senator Donna Frett-Gregory asked the Paternity and Child Support Division Program to provide a list of cases they have where individuals refuse to provide financial information.
- Senator Javan E. James, Sr. asked the Paternity and Child Support Division Program to provide a copy of the Child Support Guidelines.

The Chair, Sen. Carla J. Joseph, adjourned the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection meeting at 6:34 p.m.