

Good morning, Senator Carla Joseph, Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection; esteemed members of the Committee; and fellow members of the Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands.

My name is Joanne U. Barry, and it is both an honor and a privilege to provide testimony today on Bill No. 35-0316—An Act honoring and commending my dear friend, Mrs. Juel Turnbull Rhymer-Molloy, for her years of dedicated service and meaningful contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands.


I first met Mrs. Rhymer-Molloy during her tenure on the Virgin Islands Housing Authority Board of Commissioners. At that time, as a new member of the management team, I was struck by her meticulous attention to detail, her ability to extract critical specifics, and her remarkable shorthand note-taking skills. These qualities served as invaluable lessons for me as a young professional, though I must admit it was too late for me to master the art of shorthand!

Our paths crossed again when I was appointed Chief Labor Negotiator by Governor Alexander A. Farrelly, while Mrs. Rhymer-Molloy served as Commissioner of Human Services. Once again, I was deeply impressed by her unwavering passion for the elderly, children, and those most in need in our community. However, it was her exceptional problem-solving abilities that truly strengthened our bond.

During a Cabinet Meeting, Governor Farrelly announced the formation of a Deficit Reduction Taskforce, naming its members—including Mrs. Rhymer-Molloy—and appointing me as Chairperson. I felt a surge of anxiety, as this was a significant responsibility, and I desperately wanted to succeed. During lunch, Mrs. Rhymer-Molloy quietly reassured me, saying, “Don’t worry, you’ll be fine.” Those simple yet profound words instantly boosted my confidence. With the support of the Taskforce members from various government departments, we produced an exceptional report complete with meaningful recommendations.

It was during a break in one of our Taskforce meetings that I asked my friend if she was preparing for her Thanksgiving dinner. To my surprise, she jokingly asked if I was inviting her over. At first, I thought it was just a lighthearted comment, but after discussing it with a mutual friend in St. Croix, I realized she may have been sincere. I extended an invitation, and to my delight, she accepted. Since that day, our families have joyfully shared Thanksgiving and other holidays together for many years.

Our professional journey continued during Governor Charles Wesley Turnbull’s administration, where we reunited as colleagues—she as the Governor’s Chief of Staff and I as the Director of Personnel. Together, we were part of the government’s financial team, and once again, Mrs. Rhymer-Molloy’s contributions to our community were substantial and impactful.



TESTIMONY of JOANNE U BARRY
COMMITTEE on GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, VETERANS AFFAIRS,
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The numerous awards, certificates, and recognitions she has received on both national and local levels are a testament to her exemplary leadership, fiscal responsibility, and tireless advocacy for our community.

However, what may be less apparent is the depth of her compassion for all people—especially her family and friends. She has dedicated herself to mentoring young Virgin Islanders, supporting families facing mental health challenges, assisting those with elderly parents in need of home care, and offering a listening ear to those burdened by life’s difficulties.

For these reasons and many more, I wholeheartedly support the recognition of Mrs. Juel Turnbull Rhymer-Molloy in Bill No. 35-0316. Her legacy of service, dedication, and compassion embodies the very spirit of our community and stands as a shining example for us all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.