



Legislature Of The Virgin Islands

CAPITOL BUILDING, P.O. 1690 ST. THOMAS, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS 00804

Tel. (340) 693-3515 Fax. (340) 693-3633 Email: senatorcarlajoseph@legvi.org Website: www.senatorcarlajoseph.com

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: 24-015

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: September 27, 2024

SUBJECT: Committee Report for Tuesday, September 24, 2024 Meeting

Please find attached the report for the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection (GOVACP) meeting held on Tuesday, September 24, 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
SEPTEMBER 24, 2024 COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT**

The Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection held its meeting on Tuesday, September 24, 2024, at the Earle B. Ottley Legislative Hall on St. Thomas. The Committee received testimony and considered the following bills:

- Bill No. 35-0286 – An Act honoring and commending Verne Antonio Hodge for his years of dedicated service to the people of the Virgin Islands and its jurisprudence by renaming the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands, St. Thomas/St. John, the “Judge Verne A. Hodge Superior Court of the Virgin Islands”. This bill is sponsored by Senators Kenneth L. Gittens, Angel L. Bolques, Marvin A. Blyden, and Carla J. Joseph,
- Bill No. 35-0251 – An Act amending title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 16, section 274 relating to the changing of the name of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission to the Virgin Islands Taxicab and Limousine Commission and giving oversight authority to the Virgin Islands Taxicab and Limousine Commission over limousine services operators, and for other related purposes. This bill is sponsored by Senator Marvin A. Blyden,
- Bill No. 35-0231 – An Act amending Title 20 Virgin Islands Code, part II, Chapter 32, subchapter I, section 225c, relating to permit requirements for vehicles brought into the territory, to exempt authorized dealers from the permit requirements but require them to present a bill of lading. This bill is sponsored by Senator Alma Francis Heyliger, and
- Bill No. 35-0285 – An Act honoring and commending Bryan “Benny-Demus” Boulai for his outstanding achievements in the music and entertainment industries and for his contributions to the Virgin Islands community, awarding him The Official Key to the Virgin Islands and appropriating \$10,000 annually to The DEMUS Foundation. This bill is sponsored by Senator Ray Fonseca and Angel L. Bolques, Jr.

The meeting was called to order by the Committee Chair, Sen. Carla J. Joseph at 10:04 a.m.

Committee Members Present

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

Office of the Executive Director

Mr. Charles Brown, Jr.
Ms. Myrna De-Altier-Pickard

Sergeant-At-Arms

Mr. Jeromy Charleswell
Ms. Shani Smith

Non-Committee Members Present

Sen. Novelle E. Francis, Jr.
Sen. Angel L. Bolques, Jr.
Sen. Dwayne D. DeGraff
Sen. Marvin A. Blyden
Sen. Donna A. Frett-Gregory

Legislative Reporters

Ms. Tricia Sealey
Ms. Vashti Berry
Ms. Joanne Samuel
Mrs. Nadine Coley-Williams

Clerk/Timekeeper

Ms. Khadijah Hodge

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. Chaunte Herbert

Supporting Staff

Ms. Knysha Berkeley

Legal Counsel

Attorney Nandi Sekou

In block one of the meeting, Bill No. 35-0286 was introduced by Sen. Kenneth L. Gittens. The Honorable Rhys Hodge, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands; The Honorable Maria Cabret, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands; The Honorable Debra Watlington, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands; The Honorable Brenda J. Hollar, Retired Judge of the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands; Mrs. Alma Plaskett, Retired Asst. Court Administrator of the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands; Ms. Bridget Hodge; and The Honorable Tregenza T. Roach, Lt Governor of the Virgin Islands testified in support of the bill. Senators proceeded with one (1) round of three (3) minutes each of questioning. Senator Gittens made a motion for Bill No. 35-0286 to be approved and forwarded to the Rules and Judiciary Committee for further consideration. The motion was seconded by Senators Francis Heyliger, Potter, James, Carrion, and Fonseca. 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. 35-0251 was introduced by Sen. Marvin A. Blyden. Mr. Horace Graham, Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs; Ms. Elizabeth Hansen Watley, Interim Chair of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission Board; Ms. Vernice Gumbs, Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission; Mr. Pedro Williams, Esq., Attorney with Chris Limousine, LLC.; Mr. Chris Watson, CEO of The Tropical Adventure Group; Mr. Paschal Simeon, Jr., Ground Manager of Best Taxi; Mr. Kerry Harrigan, President of Best Taxi; and Mr. Mervin Smith, President of East End Taxicab Association testified on the bill. Senators proceeded with one (1) round of five (5) minutes each of questioning. Senator Potter made a motion for Bill No. 35-0251 to be held at the call of the chair. The motion was seconded by Senators Fonseca and Francis Heyliger. Voting in favor were Senators Carrion, Fonseca, Francis Heyliger, Joseph, and Potter. The motion was carried.

In block three of the meeting, Bill No. 35-0231 was introduced by Sen. Alma Francis Heyliger. Mr. Justin Workman, Director of Operations of Drive Green V.I. testified in support of the bill. Ms. Barbara Jackson McIntosh, Director of the Virgin Islands Bureau of Motor Vehicles testimony was read onto the record. In Director Jackson McIntosh's testimony she voiced opposition to the bill, stating that removing the provision that provides for immediate communication with the BMV is a step backward for enforcement. Senator Francis Heyliger made a motion for Bill No. 35-0231 to be held in the committee at the call of the chair. The motion was seconded by Senator Fonseca and Potter. Voting in favor were Senators Fonseca, Francis Heyliger, James, Joseph, and Potter. The motion was carried.

In the final block of the meeting, Bill No. 35-0285 was introduced by Sen. Ray Fonseca. Honorable Calvert White, Commissioner of the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation; Mr. Theron Thomas; Mr. Jose Tony Rosario; and Mr. Sheldon Turnbull testified in support of bill. Senators proceeded with one (1) round of three (3) minutes each of questioning. Senator Fonseca made a motion to move Amendment No. 35-1001 to Bill No. 35-0285. The motion was seconded by Senators Potter, James, and Carrion. The motion was carried. Senator Fonseca made a motion for Bill No. 35-0285 as amended to be approved and forwarded to the Rules and Judiciary Committee for further consideration. The motion was seconded by Senators Carrion, Francis Heyliger, James, and Potter. Voting in favor were Senators Carrion, Fonseca, Francis Heyliger, 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 Marvin A. Blyden asked the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA) to provide a list of how many vehicles are currently operating as limousines in the territory.
- Senator Marvin A. Blyden asked the DLCA to provide a list of how many citations the Department's officers have issued to limousine operators over the last two years.
- Senator Carla J. Joseph asked the DLCA to provide a copy of the guidelines to enforce regulations with the limousines.

The Chair, Sen. Carla J. Joseph, adjourned the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection meeting at 8:18 p.m.