



# Legislature of the Virgin Islands

## Office of Senator Kenneth L. Gittens

Capitol Building, Charlotte Amalie, VI 00804 • 3022 Golden Rock, Christiansted, VI 00820

**Kenneth L. Gittens**  
Senate Majority Leader

### COMMITTEES

Homeland Security,  
Justice & Public  
Safety

**Chairperson**  
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Health, Hospitals &  
Human Services

**Vice-Chair**  
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Rules & Judiciary

**Member**  
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Disaster Recovery,  
Infrastructure &  
Planning

**Member**  
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Government  
Operations, Veterans  
Affairs, & Consumer  
Protection

**Member**  
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Committee of the  
Whole

**Member**

**TO:** Kurell A. Sheridan, J.D.

**FROM:** Kenneth L. Gittens  
Chairman

**DATE:** February 28, 2023

**SUBJECT:** February 7 - Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety Committee Report

Find attached committee report from the February 7, 2023 hearing of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, submitted pursuant to Rule 605 of the Rules of the 35<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the Virgin Islands.

### COMMITTEE REPORT- Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety

The Committee on Homeland Security, Justice & Public Safety held a legislative committee hearing at **10:00 a.m., Tuesday, February 7, 2023**, in the **Earle B. Ottley Legislative Hall**, on **St. Thomas, V.I.** to hear overview testimony from the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency, the Virgin Islands National Guard, the Virgin Islands Department of Justice, the Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections and the Virgin Islands Police Department.

Meeting called to order at 10:10 a.m.

#### Committee Members in Attendance:

Senator Angel L. Bolques, Jr.  
Senator Franklin D. Johnson  
Senator Alma Francis Heyliger  
Senator Ray Fonseca  
Senator Javan E. James, Sr.  
Senator Kenneth L. Gittens  
Senator Dwayne DeGraff

#### Non-Committee members in Attendance:

Senator Diane Capehart  
Senator Carla J. Joseph  
Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr.

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*“Lead By Example”*

Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory

**Legislative Reporters:** Joanne Samuel, Tricia D. Sealey, Vashti Gerald-Berry  
**Legal Counsel:** Agustin Ayala

**Public Affairs / Media:**

Omari Hicks  
Chaunte Herbert  
Melissa Gustave  
Alwyn Baptiste  
Alvin Burke  
Bernard Matthew  
Eustace Browne  
Barry Leerdam  
Africah Harrigan  
Jamal Potter

**Security / Sergeant-at-Arms:** Delvin Fleming  
**Clerked by:** Shenika Dowe-Serrano/ Fiona Stokes

Chairman recognizes Black History Month: Anthon “Chucky” Christian (VIPD) and MG Gene Romney (VING). Also acknowledges the Turkey earthquakes and says that our territory should remain vigilant.

Chairman gave remarks and asked for clerk to call the attendance and read the agenda into the record. Recess for 3 minutes to get media in STX connected @ 10:21 a.m. back on the record @ 10:24 a.m. Quorum established. Non committee members welcomed:  
Sen. Carla Joseph  
Sen. Diane Capehart.

Agenda and all correspondences read into the record. VIPD sent an excusal letter saying they can not appear for participating in Block III. Senator Bolques and Francis Heyliger both sent tardy letters. Chairman allows senators 1 minute to state their expectations on the record.

D. DeGraff, Senator F. Johnson and Senator J. James each rise on their time for remarks. Chairman acknowledged the presence of Senator D. Frett-Gregory and allows Sens. Capehart, Frett-Gregory and Joseph to put their expectations on the record.

Senator R. Fonseca was acknowledged and gave his welcome and expectations on his time.  
Chairman recognizes Senator A. Francis Heyliger and allows her to put her expectations on the record.

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**BLOCK I - 10:00 A.M.**

The committee received overview testimony on the department's operations, capital projects, and other initiatives.

**Invited Testifiers:**

Daryl Jaschen, Director, Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (V.I.T.E.M.A.)

Major General Kojo S. Knox-Limbacker, Adjutant General, Virgin Islands National Guard

The chairman recognizes the testifiers in the chambers and those on virtual platform:

Chairman allows MG Knox-Limbacker/LT. Sutton to put VING testimony on the record  
Chairman allows Daryl Jaschen to put his testimony on the record.

Recess for 2 minutes @ 11:25 a.m. – Back on the record at 11:27 a.m.

Chairman allows Senators 5 minutes for their line of questioning.

Senators DeGraff, Fonseca, Javan James, Johnson and Capehart each questioned for their 5 minutes.

Sen. Gittens follows up on the shelter/generators on islands.

- Chairman recognizes Sen. Francis, Jr.  
Senators Joseph, Frett- Gregory, Francis Heyliger and Francis, Jr. each questioned for their 5 minutes.

Sen. Frett-Gregory asks for a Point of Information: RE: Act 8686 to Director Jaschen

- Sen. Gittens asks questions about aviation project in STX and asks Director Jaschen about shelter accommodations and working generators and sufficient 911 dispatchers and what is being done to address this shortage
  - Chair recognizes Sen. Francis Heyliger for Point of Inquiry about hiring process of 911 operators
  - Chair recognizes Sen. DeGraff through the chair for plan with community collaborations for care and assistance to MG Knox-Limbacker and Dir. Jaschen
  - Sen. Fonseca is recognized on a follow-up on 911 operators and Dir. Jaschen about looking into shelter locations in the West of the island (Bordeaux, Fortuna area)
  - Sen. Capehart recognized on a follow up question
  - Sen. Frett-Gregory recognized for a follow up question to Director Jaschen about other vacancies and what are their challenges
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**Invited Testifiers:**

Daryl George, Director, Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services.  
Chairman recognizes the testifier and Director George presented his testimony.

Chairman allows Senators 5 minutes for their line of questioning.

Senators DeGraff, Fonseca, Javan James, Johnson, Joseph, Francis Heyliger, Francis, Jr. and Capehart each questioned the testifiers for their 5 minutes.

Senator Bolques asked for a point of personal privilege to of Margarete Wells.  
Senator Gittens asked for a moment of silence for Retired Firefighter Floyd Petersen.  
Certified Emergency Vehicular Operations Course  
Discussions were had about the number of fire marshals due to numerous fires under investigation.

Director George spoke about challenges and advantages of the integration of FEMS.  
If he had a wish list the top items would include a new firehouse for Richmond and one for Frederiksted on St. Croix.

No property is available in Fsted, but they are looking at land in Anna's Hope that they can utilized to replace the Richmond Fire station.

They discussed new fire trucks and the ambulance fireboat coming on line for St. Thomas/ St. John.

Director George wrapped up with a statement.

Chairman Gittens concluded the hearing and adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

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