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To: Honorable Senator Kenneth L. Gittens, Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice, and Public Safety, Committee Members, other Senators present, and the listening and viewing audience.

Re: Testimony on Bill No. 35-0013, An Act amending Title 20 Virgin Islands Code, part 2, chapter 35, relating to the issuance of motor vehicle operators ' licenses and identification cards to allow applicants to obtain limited local-purpose identification cards and operators ' licenses without providing certain federally required documentation.

Blessings and good morning Honorable Senators

As indicated above my name is Norman JnBaptiste, a naturalized citizen of the United States, a former Virgin Islands Senator, and a retired Secondary School teacher. Thank you for the opportunity to provide some testimony on the above-referenced proposal.

Senators, I have personally experienced the high cost and considerably inordinate length of time it takes to get a replacement naturalization certificate which is currently an essential requirement to obtain or renew a driver's license in the Territory. Consequently, I humbly ask that you consider how successful passage of this Bill may be beneficial to those similarly situated and to certain individuals trying to escape indigency, or those previously incarcerated and seeking re-entry into society with the aim of becoming productive members of the community.

While I have not been privy to the particular circumstances faced by undocumented individuals in our jurisdiction, I can imagine the heart-wrenching challenges and feelings of depression such individuals may have to endure, when unable to access necessary goods and services due to legally imposed constraints or restrictive requirements that deny driving privileges; particularly in circumstances where public transportation may be inaccessible or unreliable.

In conclusion, I believe that Bill No. 35-0013 is in line with a developing national trend and unless I am mistaken, Puerto Rico is one such jurisdiction amongst approximately 17 others. Senators, the facts have been presented and the time to act is now.

Again, thank you for your indulgence and the opportunity to provide some input on this important measure.