

**THIRTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY, JUSTICE, AND
PUBLIC SAFETY**

Chairman Kenneth L. Gittens

Virgin Islands Police Department

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

Good morning Honorable Kenneth L. Gittens, Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, Committee Members, members of the 35th Legislature, legislative staff, fellow testifiers, and to the listening and viewing audience. I am Police Sergeant Ludrick Thomas, Special Assistant to Ray A. Martinez, Police Commissioner, Virgin Islands Police Department. Thank you for providing VIPD the opportunity to offer testimony on Bill Number 35-0013, "an Act amending Title 20 Virgin Islands Code, Part II, Chapter 35, relating to the issuance of operators' licenses and identification cards to allow applicants to obtain limited local-purpose identification cards and operators' licenses without providing certain federally required documentation.

The ability of law enforcement to confirm the identity of adult persons in certain instances is integral to constitutional policing. Here in the Territory adults are **not required to walk with identification**. VIPD supports the issuance of identification cards to undocumented persons for identification purposes.

Eighteen States and the District of Columbia, provide driver's licenses to undocumented persons who cannot produce documents to obtain driver's licenses under state laws. Those states hope to encourage unlicensed undocumented drivers to take and pass the driver's license test and obtain vehicle insurance. It is anticipated that those individuals who successfully pass the driver's test would be safer drivers.

To obtain the license, VIPD recommends the applicant show proof of residing in the Territory for at least one year, provide a valid passport from another country or consular identification, and successfully pass the driver's license examination. The license should clearly be marked indicating it is a temporary license valid for three years.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on behalf of Police Commissioner Ray Martinez and VIPD on Bill No. 35-0013, "an Act amending Title 20 Virgin Islands Code, Part II, Chapter 35. I am available to answer your questions.