

Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services

**Testimony on Bill No. 35-0127,
*an Act amending Title 14 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 89
relating to the invasion of privacy of accident and crime
victims by first responders***



**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY, JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY
35th LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

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Presented By: Antonio Stevens, Assistant Director of Fire

Good morning, Honorable Chairman Kenneth L. Gittens, other members of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, and the listening and viewing audience.

I am Antonio Stevens, Assistant Director of Fire of the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services (VIFEMS). I appear before you today to offer testimony on Bill 35-0127, an Act amending Title 14, Chapter 89 of the Virgin Islands Code to prohibit the disclosure of images of a person receiving medical care or other assistance.

At VIFEMS, we respect the dignity of the individuals we serve and are committed to safeguarding their privacy. As such, we are in full support of Bill 35-0127.

The proposed legislation effectively protects the privacy of patients and crime victims without unduly restricting first responders.

The bill establishes clear prohibitions against the recording, reproduction, or disclosure of images of any person receiving medical care or other assistance, while creating exceptions for legitimate purposes. It also broadly defines the term first responder, ensuring the prohibitions against recording and disclosure apply to a wide variety of emergency personnel, including members of volunteer organizations and other private entities. By establishing a criminal penalty for disclosure and allowing for civil suits against violators, the proposed legislation also creates effective deterrents.

If enacted, Bill 35-0127 will become a powerful tool for preserving the privacy and dignity of patients and crime victims, and VIFEMS humbly recommends that this Committee take favorable action on the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am available to answer any questions you may have.

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