

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF DR. BERT PETERSEN JR. 'S NOMINATION TO THE U.V.I.
BOARD OD TRUSTEES

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Good Afternoon Honorable Senator Capehart, Chair of the Rules and Judiciary Committee,
Honorable Senators, Staff listening and viewing Audiences.

I am both honored and humbled to have been asked to speak in support of Dr. Petersen's nomination to the University of the Virgin Islands Board of Trustees. However, I must admit my first feeling, when asked, was one of inadequacy. How could I convey my respect admiration and love for my friend objectively?

I have known Dr. Petersen 18 of his 30 plus year medical career. I met him through mutual friends and we connected immediately as colleagues and forged a lasting friendship.

Dr. Petersen's accomplishments, as I am sure you are aware, are beyond impressive. The accolades and awards he has received in three decades are literally too numerous for me to mention. So, what can one possibly say that could adequately summarize such a distinguished career. In short Dr. Petersen personifies Black excellence. He embodies integrity, competence, compassion and social consciousness.

He has selflessly devoted his life's work to a relentless crusade to eradicate disparities in access to quality health care for people of color. From the beginning of his career, he has employed innovative ways to educate underserved communities by creating various outreach initiatives to increase awareness of diseases that are pervasive in our community and available services. He has been named best doctor, top doctor, one of America's top doctors repeatedly by both national organizations as well as magazines and medical journals.

As a man of our fertile Virgin Islands soil he has become a nationally renowned black breast Cancer Specialist and Surgeon. This is no small feat. Keep in mind that as of 2021, less than 6% of doctors in the United States identify as black that equates to less than 50,000 in all specialties, (Association of American Medical Colleges), far less than our percentage of the population. Being honored as one of the top 100 doctors in America is again black excellence.

Dr. Petersen is not only no stranger to community activism, as demonstrated by his resume; he also has vast experience serving on both community based non-profit boards as well as professional medical boards.

Although much of Dr. Petersen's career has been serving patients in the Northeast, tri-state area Dr. Petersen has never forsaken his Caribbean home. He was a founder and served as project manager of the Charlotte Kimelman Cancer Institute as well as Project Manager/Medical Director of the Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program in the Virgin Islands for a decade.

Dr Petersen's character, professionalism, innovative initiatives and demonstrated love for his Virgin Islands home will, I have no doubt prove a great asset to the University of the Virgin Islands Board of Trustees.