

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

05/31/2023-REPORTED OUT TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY

BILL NO. 35-0033

Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

February 27, 2023

An Act honoring and commending Mr. Benburin “Benny” Stephens posthumously for his heroism in saving the lives of a mother and her children and to rename the Bovoni Road (Route No. 30), specifically from the entrance of the St. Thomas Abattoir to the entrance of the Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School, “The Benburin “Benny” Stephens Drive”

PROPOSED BY: Senators Ray Fonseca, Marvin A. Blyden and
Angel L. Bolques, Jr.

1 **WHEREAS**, Benburin Stephens and his wife Valeria lived in Estate Nadir, St. Thomas,
2 United States Virgin Islands; and

3 **WHEREAS**, on December 15, 1986, a large fire erupted in the kitchen at the Estate
4 Nadir home of Janice Daniel and her six children; and

5 **WHEREAS**, the fire quickly spread throughout the home to the living room, blocking
6 both exits, leaving Ms. Daniel and her children confined in a bedroom with no way to exit the
7 home; and

8 **WHEREAS**, on that evening, Mr. Stephens was at home watching television when he
9 smelled smoke and became alarmed; he investigated his neighborhood, and found Janice
10 Daniel and five of her six children trapped inside their burning home; and

11 **WHEREAS**, Benburin Stephens, without any fear for himself, acted quickly and tore
12 out a set of window louvers in the bedroom, pulling the family to safety; and

1 **WHEREAS**, Janice Daniel was admitted to the St. Thomas Hospital with a fractured
2 leg and second degree burns on the lower parts of her body; and

3 **WHEREAS**, the entire Daniel’s home was destroyed except for the cistern; and

4 **WHEREAS**, without any doubt, on that night, Benburin Stephens fearlessly and single-
5 handedly saved the lives of Janice Daniel and her children; and

6 **WHEREAS**, at a special ceremony held at the fire station, Mr. Stephens was awarded
7 the rank of Honorary Fire Chief and was presented with a plaque by Governor Alexander A.
8 Farrelly; and

9 **WHEREAS**, Benburin Stephens passed away on July 30, 2010; and

10 **WHEREAS**, it is the sense of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands that Benburin
11 Stephens has earned the sincere respect and admiration of the people of the Virgin Islands;
12 Now Therefore;

13 ***Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:***

14 **SECTION 1.** The Legislature of the Virgin Islands, on behalf of the people of the Virgin
15 Islands, hereby honors, commends, and thanks Mr. Benburin Stephens posthumously for his
16 heroic action in saving the lives of Janice Daniel and her children.

17 **SECTION 2.** Bovoni Road, Route No. 30, from the entrance of the St. Thomas Abattoir
18 to the entrance of Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School, is named the “The Benburin “Benny”
19 Stephens Drive”.

20 **SECTION 3.** The Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Public Works shall
21 provide for the erection of appropriate signage in an appropriate location on Bovoni Road
22 bearing the inscription “The Benburin “Benny” Stephens Drive”.

23 **SECTION 4.** (a) The sum of \$8,000 is appropriated for the fiscal year ending September
24 30, 2023, from the General Fund of the Treasury of the Government of the Virgin Islands

1 to the Department of Public Works for the erection of signage for the purpose set forth in
2 section 3.

3 (b) The sum appropriated in subsection (a) remains available until expended.

4 **SECTION 5.** In recognition and appreciation of his bravery, the President of the
5 Legislature or the President’s designee shall have a perma plaque copy of this act prepared and
6 presented to the family, or the family’s designee, of the late Benburin Stephens at an
7 appropriate ceremony.

8 **BILL SUMMARY**

9 Section 1 honors and commends Mr. Benburin Stephens posthumously for his heroic
10 action in saving the lives of Janice Daniel and her children. Section 2 names Bovoni Road,
11 Route No. 30, from the abattoir entrance to the entrance of Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School,
12 The Benburin “Benny” Stephens Drive. Section 3 directs the Commissioner of Public Works
13 to erect the appropriate signage to commemorate the event. Section 4 appropriates the sum of
14 \$8,000 to fund the cost of the placement of the signage. Section 5 requires the Legislature to
15 present a perma plaque copy of the act to the family of the late Benburin Stephens at an
16 appropriate ceremony.

17 **BR23-0262/February 22, 2023/HLF**