

TESTIMONY OF LUTHER RENEE
NOMINEE TO SERVE ON THE
VIRGIN ISLANDS CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY
35TH LEGISLATURE OF THE UNITED STATES
VIRGIN ISLANDS

MARCH 9, 2023

INTRODUCTION

GOOD MORNING, HONORABLE SENATOR DIANE CAPEHART, CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY, HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE RULES AND JUDICIARY COMMITTEE; SENATORS MILTON E. POTTER, ANGEL L. BOLQUEST JR., KENNETH L. GITTENS, MARISE C. JAMES, FRANKLIN D. JOHNSON, CARLA J. JOSEPH, OTHER MEMBERS OF THE 35TH LEGISLATURE, FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS, INDIVIDUALS IN THE SENATE CHAMBERS, AND THOSE VIEWING AND LISTENING VIA TELEVISION OR THE INTERNET AND ON THE RADIO.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

MY NAME IS LUTHER FELIX RENEE, GOVERNOR ALBERT BRYAN'S NOMINEE TO SERVE AS A MEMBER ON THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION (VICCC).

I BEGIN MY TESTIMONY BY OFFERING THANKS AND PRAISES TO THE ALMIGHTY GOD FOR THE BLESSINGS OF TODAY AND FOR AFFORDING ME ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO OFFER MY SERVICES TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS. I FEEL HONORED TO HAVE BEEN NOMINATED BY THE HONORABLE GOVERNOR TO SERVE ON THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION.

I THANK GOD ALSO FOR THE FINE UPBRINGING THAT I HAD IN A RURAL VILLAGE IN ST. LUCIA. I WAS NURTURED AND TAUGHT THE VALUES OF DECENCY AND HONESTY NOT ONLY BY MY PARENTS, BUT ALSO BY THE ENTIRE VILLAGE OF LABORIE WHERE IT TRULY TOOK A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD. IN LABORIE, THIS MANTRA HAD SUBSTANCE AND REAL MEANING AND WAS PRACTICED EVERY DAY.

CURRENTLY, I AM MARRIED TO CECILE RENEE AND A PROUD FATHER OF FOUR (4) GIRLS AND A DOTING GRANDFATHER OF NINE (9). I AM A GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES, ST. AUGUSTIN, TRINIDAD. I HOLD A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN ECONOMICS, MAJORING IN PUBLIC FINANCE AND MONETARY ECONOMICS. ADDITIONALLY, I HOLD A MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA. I GRADUATED WITH DISTINCTION WITH A 3.88 GPA OUT OF A POSSIBLE 4.0. ON THE BASIS OF SUCH STELLAR PERFORMANCE, I WAS GRANTED A FELLOWSHIP TO CONTINUE TO A PH. D FROM THE SAME INSTITUTION. ALTHOUGH I STARTED, LIFE GOT IN THE WAY, AND I DID NOT COMPLETE THE PROGRAM.

TODAY, I APPEAR BEFORE YOU, THE MEMBERS OF THIS AUGUST BODY, TO SEEK YOUR SUPPORT AND APPROVAL OF MY NOMINATION TO SERVE ON THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION AS THE GOVERNOR HAS REQUESTED. I AM HERE FOR YOU TO JUDGE AND ASSESS MY QUALIFICATIONS TO BECOME, WITH YOUR ADVICE AND CONSENT, A MEMBER OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION. IN EVERY POSITION THAT I HAVE HELD IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OR ELSEWHERE, I HAVE ACTED IN AN UPRIGHT MANNER. I BELIEVE THAT MY WIDE CAREER EXPERIENCES IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, AND MY LEADERSHIP ROLES IN THESE INSTITUTIONS HAVE PROVIDED ME WITH THE PREREQUISITES AND UNDERSTANDING NECESSARY FOR THE POSITION THAT I HAVE BEEN NOMINATED FOR.

EXPERIENCE AND SERVICE

I WOULD NOW LIKE TO OUTLINE MY PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER EXPERIENCES WHICH WILL GIVE YOU SOME FURTHER INSIGHT INTO MY QUALIFICATIONS TO SERVE AS A MEMBER OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION.

I HAVE HAD AN EXTENSIVE AND REWARDING CAREER IN WHICH I HAVE GAINED TREMENDOUS KNOWLEDGE WHICH HAS EQUIPPED ME WITH THE FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS TO SERVE ON THIS ESTEEMED COMMISSION.

BEFORE LEAVING MY NATIVE ST. LUCIA, I SERVED AS THE BUSINESS MANAGER AT WHAT IS NOW CALLED THE VIEUX-FORT

SECONDARY SCHOOL. I ALSO SERVED AS AN ECONOMIST FOR A BANANA CORPORATION THEN CALLED THE WINDWARD ISLANDS BANANA GROWERS ASSOCIATION (WINBAN). MY JOB WAS TO TREND ECONOMIC INDICATORS AND ADVISE THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE CORPORATION ON POLICY DIRECTIONS TO TAKE REGARDING THE BANANA INDUSTRY.

I LEFT THIS JOB AND MIGRATED TO ST. CROIX. MY FIRST JOB HERE WAS AS A MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER AT THE NOW DEFUNCT GOOD HOPE SCHOOL IN FREDERIKSTED. AFTER A FEW YEARS, I WAS PROMOTED TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL WHERE I MANAGED THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS OF THAT DIVISION, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, SUPERVISING AND EVALUATING A STAFF OF APPROXIMATELY 25 TO 30, AND OVERSEEING A STUDENT BODY OF A FEW HUNDRED.

DURING THAT TIME, I MOONLIGHTED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS (UVI), FIRST AS THE STUDENT RECORDS OFFICER AND LATER AS AN ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS. I TAUGHT MICROECONOMICS AND MACROECONOMICS TO GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS UNTIL THE START OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. I HAVE INCLUDED IN MY CONSIDERATION PACKAGE NUMEROUS TESTIMONIALS FROM STUDENTS WHO HAVE ATTESTED TO MY PROFESSIONAL MANNER WHILE CARRYING OUT MY TEACHING DUTIES.

IN 1998, I BECAME THE FULL-TIME DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS AND ACADEMIC SERVICES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS. I HAD THE AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY OF HANDLING STUDENT ADMISSIONS AS WELL AS OVERSEEING THE COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES FOR THE GRADUATING CLASSES. PART OF MY RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDED THE EVALUATION OF FOREIGN TRANSCRIPTS TO DETERMINE ADMISSIONS ELIGIBILITY. THAT JOB ALSO INCLUDED THE EVALUATION OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC RECORDS TO DETERMINE WHETHER THEY HAD MET ALL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS. THAT TASK DEMONSTRATED MY EXTRAORDINARY ATTENTION TO DETAIL, PATIENCE, AND RELIABILITY. AT THAT TIME GRADE POINT AVERAGES (GPA) AT UVI WERE CALCULATED MANUALLY. THE METICULOUS ATTENTION TO DETAIL TO DETERMINE WHETHER

A STUDENT GRADUATED OR NOT REQUIRED EXTREME FOCUSED ATTENTION.

I LEFT UVI WHEN I WON A SENATE SEAT AND SERVED IN THE 25TH LEGISLATURE OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS, A POSITION I SERVED WITH DIGNITY, PRIDE, AND A SENSE OF PURPOSE. IN THE LEGISLATURE, I SERVED AS CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE; VICE-CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF FINANCE AND SERVED ON THE COMMITTEES OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH.

AFTER MY TERM IN THE LEGISLATURE, I SERVED AS AN ECONOMIST ATTACHED TO THE BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH (BER) IN THE TURNBULL/RICHARD ADMINISTRATION. OUR FOCUS AT THAT TIME WAS TO STUDY THE ECONOMY OF ST. CROIX AND TO DECIDE ON OPTIONS TO REVITALIZE THE ECONOMY OF ST. CROIX. I FOCUSED ON ECONOMIC DATA TO MAKE A CASE FOR THE HOSTING OF SEVERAL EVENTS TO IGNITE THE ECONOMY OF ST. CROIX, INCLUDING HOSTING THE FLORIDA CARIBBEAN CRUISE ASSOCIATION (FCCA) ANNUAL MEETING ON THE ISLAND. AS MANY WILL RECALL, THIS WAS ALSO THE ERA OF TRYING HARD-TO-PLACE CASINO GAMBLING AS A PILLAR FOR THE ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION OF ST. CROIX.

IN 2007, GOVERNOR DE JONGH TOOK OFFICE AND CHOSE ME TO SERVE AS THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, A POSITION I SERVED FOR HIS TWO TERMS IN OFFICE. I SERVED WITH DISTINCTION ASSISTING THE COMMISSIONER, DR. LOUIS PETERSEN IN IMPLEMENTING SEVERAL NEW INITIATIVES. WE INTRODUCED THE REQUIREMENT TO PRODUCE A BUSINESS PLAN TO OBTAIN GOVERNMENT PROPERTY FOR AGRICULTURE, AN INNOVATION WE LABELED AS AGRICULTURE AS A BUSINESS. WE ALSO INTRODUCED THE SPECIALTY CROPS PROGRAM AND A PIONEERING PROGRAM TO ALLOW FARMERS TO ACCEPT FOOD STAMP COUPONS FROM THE PUBLIC. IN ADDITION TO THESE NEW PROGRAMS, I ALSO RAN THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS AT THE ST. CROIX OFFICE. I ROUTINELY ASSUMED THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT'S INTERNAL MEDIATOR TO SUCCESSFULLY RESOLVE DISPUTES AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS AMONG THE AGENCY'S PERSONNEL AND CLIENTS.

AS ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE, I ALSO SERVED AS THE VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS AGRICULTURE AND FOOD FAIR BOARD IN CHARGE OF OPERATIONS. HOSTING THE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD FAIR REQUIRES HARD WORK, DEDICATION, AND A TREMENDOUS ATTENTION TO DETAIL, ALL OF WHICH I HAVE SUCCESSFULLY DONE FOR THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS. MANY OF YOU WILL NOTE THAT THE JUST CONCLUDED AGRICULTURE AND FOOD FAIR OF A FEW WEEKS AGO WAS A SUCCESS IN TERMS OF OPERATION. THE OPERATIONS OF THE FAIR WERE MY RESPONSIBILITY, WHICH INCLUDED DETERMINING THE LOCATION OF EVERY EXHIBITOR, SPONSOR, AND GOVERNMENT AGENCY ON THE GROUNDS TO ENSURE THEY ACHIEVED THEIR STATED OBJECTIVES. BECAUSE OF ALL THIS HARD WORK, I WAS VERY HONORED AND HUMBLED WHEN THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECOGNIZED THIS AND NAMED THE FAIRGROUNDS IN 2016 "THE LUTHER RENEE FAIRGROUNDS."

IN 2015, WHEN MY SERVICE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE WAS ENDED DURING THE MAPP ADMINISTRATION, I NOT ONLY CONTINUED TO SERVE AS AN ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS AT UVI, BUT I ALSO CONTRIBUTED MY TEACHING SERVICES AT SCHOOLS SUCH AS AZ ACADEMY AND ST. PATRICK'S SCHOOL. WHICH BRINGS ME HERE TODAY.

HONORABLE SENATORS, I HAVE SERVED MY COMMUNITY ON SEVERAL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS; MOST NOTABLY, I HAVE SERVED ON THE PUBLIC SERVICES (PSC) COMMISSION FOR OVER TEN YEARS RISING TO THE POSITION OF VICE CHAIRMAN. WHILE ON THE PSC I LEARNED OF THE WORKING OF A REGULATORY BODY. THE PSC IS NOT UNLIKE THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION IN ITS ROLE AS A REGULATORY BODY. WHILE SERVING ON THE PSC, I LEARNED A LOT TO PREPARE ME FOR THIS PRESENT POSITION, TO INCLUDE THE NEED TO BALANCE THE INTEREST OF THE UTILITY WITH THE NEEDS OF THE RATE PAYERS. SIMILARLY, AS A MEMBER OF THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION, I WILL HAVE TO BALANCE THE ECONOMIC INTEREST OF THE INVESTORS AND THE PROTECTIONS AND WELFARE OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

IN ADDITION TO THE ALREADY MENTIONED POSITIONS, I ALSO SERVED ON THE "SCHOOL-TO-WORK BOARD," RUN AT THAT TIME BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ALSO SERVED AS A MEMBER OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

DISTINCTIVE HONORS

MADAM CHAIR, I HAVE RECEIVED MANY MERITORIOUS AWARDS IN MY MANY, MANY YEARS OF SERVICE TO THIS COMMUNITY, BUT I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DID NOT MENTION TO YOU THE THREE THAT HAVE GIVEN ME THE MOST PRIDE.

FIRSTLY, AS I MENTIONED EARLIER, IN 2016 THE AGRICULTURE AND FAIRGROUNDS WAS NAMED "THE LUTHER RENEE FAIRGROUNDS." THIS HONOR IS OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE BECAUSE NOTHING IS MORE GRATIFYING THAN TO BE RECOGNIZED BY YOUR PEERS.

SECONDLY, IN 2017 AND 2018, THE GRADUATING CLASSES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS ELECTED ME TO BE THE CO-MARSHALL AND MARSHALL, RESPECTIVELY, FOR THOSE CLASSES. THAT WAS A GREAT HONOR AS THAT PRESTIGIOUS DISTINCTION IS RARELY BESTOWED UPON ADJUNCT PROFESSORS.

THIRDLY, AND LASTLY, IN 2017 THE STUDENTS AND FACULTY OF AZ ACADEMY VOTED ME "TEACHER OF THE YEAR." THIS AWARD MEANT A LOT TO ME AS IT MEANT THAT I HAD EARNED THE RESPECT AND ADMIRATION BY SERVING AS A ROLE MODEL FOR NOT ONLY MY STUDENTS, BUT ALSO THE STAFF, AND ALWAYS HAVING THE BEST INTERESTS OF MY STUDENTS IN MIND.

I MENTION THESE TO NOT ONLY ADD UPON MY RECOLLECTION OF A DISTINGUISHED AND ESTEEMED CAREER, BUT ALSO TO HIGHLIGHT THAT NO MATTER WHERE I HAVE WORKED, I HAVE DONE SO WITH THE HIGHEST SENSE OF INTEGRITY; AN ATTRIBUTE THAT A MEMBER OF THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH TO ADEQUATELY SERVE.

WHEREVER I HAVE WORKED AND IN WHATEVER CAPACITY, I HAVE DEMONSTRATED CONSISTENTLY A STRONG WORK ETHIC AND A PASSION FOR THE JOB, WHILE EXERTING LEVELS OF

LEADERSHIP, MATURITY, AND A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE. I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE AN ABILITY TO ADDRESS AND EXPLAIN COMPLEX ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS PRINCIPLES. MY STRONG KNOWLEDGE OF ECONOMICS, MY DEMONSTRATED LEADERSHIP SKILLS, AND MY ANALYTICAL ABILITY MAKE ME SUITABLE TO SERVE ON A DELIBERATIVE AND REGULATORY BODY LIKE THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION.

HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE, ALL OTHER MEMBERS OF THE 35TH LEGISLATURE, I HOPE I HAVE ADEQUATELY PROVIDED YOU WITH MY EXTENSIVE EDUCATION, TRAINING, EXPERIENCE AND EXAMPLES OF MY COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT. BASED ON THE FOLLOWING OVERVIEW OF THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION, THAT I WILL PROVIDE, IT IS MY HOPE THAT EACH OF YOU WILL FIND THAT I AM EMINENTLY QUALIFIED TO SERVE ON THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION.

THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION

I AM FAMILIAR WITH THE WORKINGS OF THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION BECAUSE WHEN I SERVED IN THE LEGISLATURE, JUDGE EILEEN PETERSEN INVITED ME ON MANY OCCASIONS TO HAVE DISCUSSIONS ON THE POPULAR TOPIC OF THE TIME: CASINO GAMBLING AS A CONCEPT TO REVITALIZE THE ST. CROIX ECONOMY IN THE HOPES THAT IT WILL SPUR HOTEL DEVELOPMENT; AND WHILE IT WOULD INCREASE REVENUE, IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT IT HAD TO BE REGULATED.

THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION WAS ESTABLISHED BY TITLE 32 VIRGIN ISLANDS CODE, CHAPTER 21, AS AMENDED, IN NOVEMBER 1995 (ACT NO 6069). THE COMMISSION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REGULATIONS OF CASINOS PURSUANT TO THE AFOREMENTIONED ACT., AND SUBSEQUENTLY BY ACT 6419, THE INTERNET GAMING AND GAMBLING ACT; RACINOS, PURSUANT TO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS RACING INDUSTRY ASSISTANT ACT OF 2011, (ACT NO. 7318) AND THE CASINO IV ESTABLISHMENTS (ACT NO. 7702). THE COMMISSION IS AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS, WHOSE BUDGET SHALL BE APPROVED ANNUALLY BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS. THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION CONSISTS OF THREE (3) COMMISSION MEMBERS

APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR WITH THE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS AND SERVE A TERM OF FIVE (5) YEARS. ALL MEMBERS MUST BE UNITED STATES CITIZENS AND LEGAL RESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS. TWO (2) MEMBERS ARE TO BE CITIZENS AND LEGAL RESIDENTS OF THE DISTRICT OF ST. CROIX, AND ONE (1) MEMBER MUST BE FROM THE DISTRICTS OF ST. THOMAS OR ST. JOHN.

TITLE 32, CHAPTER 21 SECTION 406(D) STATES THAT APPOINTMENTS TO THE COMMISSION SHALL BE MADE BY THE GOVERNOR WITH THE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE LEGISLATURE. PRIOR TO THE NOMINATION, THE GOVERNOR SHALL CAUSE AN INVESTIGATION TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL INTO THE NOMINEE'S BACKGROUND WITH PARTICULAR REGARD TO THE NOMINEE'S FINANCIAL STABILITY, INTEGRITY AND RESPONSIBILITY AND HIS OR HER REPUTATION FOR GOOD CHARACTER, HONESTY AND INTEGRITY. I WANTED TO HIGHLIGHT THIS SECTION FOR EMPHASIS, BECAUSE I SUBMIT TO YOU THAT I WAS SUBJECTED TO THIS EXHAUSTIVE INVESTIGATION AND BY VIRTUE OF ME SITTING HERE BEFORE YOU TODAY, I WAS ABLE TO MEET THAT STANDARD FOR THE GOVERNOR TO SUBMIT MY NOMINATION FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE DID NOT FIND ME WANTING IN TERMS OF MY REPUTATION FOR GOOD CHARACTER, HONESTY, AND INTEGRITY.

DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION

THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION IS MANDATED BY LAW TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A LICENSING AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK THAT PERMITS AND PROMOTES THE STABILITY AND CONTINUITY OF THE GAMBLING AND GAMING INDUSTRY IN THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS PURSUANT TO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CASINO AND RESORT CONTROL ACT OF 1995 AS AMENDED, OF INTERNET GAMING AND GAMBLING PURSUANT TO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS INTERNET GAMING AND INTERNET GAMBLING ACT AS AMENDED, AND OF RACINOS PURSUANT TO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS HORSE RACING INDUSTRY ASSISTANT ACT OF 2011 AND 2016 AS AMENDED BY ASSURING THE GOOD CHARACTER, HONESTY AND INTEGRITY OF ALL LICENSED OPERATORS AND EMPLOYEES AND RELATED BUSINESSES; BY PROTECTING THE GAMBLING

AND GAMING INDUSTRY FROM THE INFLUENCE OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY; AND BY FOSTERING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE GAMBLING AND GAMING INDUSTRY. THE COMMISSION IS LEGALLY REQUIRED TO:

- **ISSUE AND REGISTER LICENSES TO APPLICABLE ENTITIES, EMPLOYEES, AND SERVICE INDUSTRIES.**
- **COLLECT FEES ASSOCIATED WITH REGISTRATION, IMPOSE LEVIES AND PENALTIES.**
- **CONDUCT INVESTIGATIONS AND OTHER CIVIL HEARINGS RELATED TO**
 - **REGISTRATIONS,**
 - **CERTIFICATION,**
 - **DECISIONS ON ALL LICENSES, AND**
 - **MATTERS AFFECTING SUSPENSION, REVOCATION, OR RENEWAL OF APPLICATIONS.**
- **ADMINISTER RULES AND REGULATIONS REGARDING THE MANUFACTURING AND SALE OF GAMING DEVICES.**
- **ENSURE COMPLIANCE OF TITLE 32 AND RELATED LAWS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE COMMISSION.**
- **CONDUCT DAILY INSPECTIONS WITHIN THE GAMING INDUSTRY TO:**
 - **VERIFY THE SOURCE OF CASINO REVENUE,**
 - **EXAMINE DOCUMENTATION AND PROPER FINANCIAL RECORDING OF REVENUES,**
 - **REVIEW PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ON THE CONDUCT OF GAMING AND WAGERING OPERATIONS, AND**
 - **CONDUCT PERIODIC REVIEW OF CASINO FACILITIES.**

A KEY COMPONENT TO EFFECTIVE REGULATION IS: THE GAMING REGULATORS ENFORCE GAMING LAWS. A REGULATOR THAT FAILS TO ENFORCE LAWS CAN EFFECTIVELY RENDER THEM MEANINGLESS. THE REGULATED WILL REALIZE THAT THEY CAN VIOLATE THE LAWS WITH IMPUNITY, AND THOSE WITH LOW ETHICS WILL DO SO. IN CONTRAST, THOSE WITH HIGH BUSINESS PROBITY WILL BE PLACED AT A COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGE. LIKewise, PATRONS MAY LOSE CONFIDENCE IN THE INTEGRITY OF THE INDUSTRY. THEREFORE, IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT THE ENFORCEMENT ARM OF THE COMMISSION BE GIVEN THE TOOLS AND RESOURCES NEEDED TO CARRY OUT ITS MISSION AND THE COMMISSION RENDERS FULL SUPPORT.

THE COMMISSION IS JOINED IN ITS REGULATORY EFFORTS BY THE DIVISION OF GAMING ENFORCEMENT (DGE) WHICH IS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL. THE DGE WHICH GETS ITS MANDATE FROM TITLE 32, SECTION 428 OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CODE, IS UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A DIRECTOR, WHO IS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR, WITH THE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE LEGISLATURE. THE DGE IS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROTECTING THE PUBLIC'S INTEREST BY MAINTAINING A LEGITIMATE AND VIABLE INDUSTRY THROUGH ENFORCEMENT OF THE CASINO LAWS AND REGULATIONS. OVERSIGHT OF THE DGE INCLUDES INSPECTION, INVESTIGATION, AUDITS AND CRIMINAL AND REGULATORY PROSECUTION.

VISIONS FOR THE COMMISSION

I WOULD LIKE TO NOW FOCUS THE DISCUSSION OF MY VISION FOR THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION. WHEN I WAS OFFERED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE, AMONG MY MANY ACTIONS WAS TO GO TO "THE LITTLE GREEN BOOK" WHICH JUDGE EILEEN PETERSEN GIFTED TO ME WHEN I SERVED IN THE LEGISLATURE. I ALSO VISITED THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE TO REVIEW THE AVAILABLE INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN. I READ THE COMMISSION'S BUDGET TESTIMONY AND THE RELATED POST AUDITOR'S ANALYSIS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023. I ALSO REVIEWED A-01-39-18 WHICH IS THE INSPECTOR GENERAL'S AUDIT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION. THE AUDIT COVERED THE FISCAL YEARS 2013 THROUGH 2016. THE REPORT PRODUCED FOUR MAJOR FINDINGS RELATED TO THE AREA OF INTERNAL CONTROLS, OPERATING EXPENDITURES, TRAVEL EXPENSES, AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. THE AUDIT FOUND THAT THE COMMISSION WAS NOT EFFECTIVELY UTILIZING ITS RESOURCES TO CARRY OUT ITS ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH ESTABLISHED RULES AND REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, AND BEST PRACTICES. MULTIPLE RECOMMENDATIONS WERE MADE IN THE AUDIT REPORT ADDRESSING THE FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL. THE COMMISSION RESPONDED TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS BY RESOLUTION OF AUGUST 23, 2018 AND INDICATED THAT THE

RECOMMENDATIONS WERE RESOLVED. THE RESTORATION OF TRUST, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE. THE CONTINUED RESTORATION OF TRUST AND THE INTEGRITY OF THE COMMISSION WILL BE PART OF MY MISSION.

ADDITIONALLY, I HAVE FAMILIARIZED MYSELF WITH THE UPDATED DEFINITIONS OF “SLOT MACHINES” AND “VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS” AS WERE AMENDED IN ACT 8577, GOVERNOR BRYAN’S LEGISLATION SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS LOTTERY (VIL) AND THE AMENDED CLINTON E. PHIPPS RACETRACK DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT WHICH VIL OVERSEES.

SENATORS, THE WORLD HAS BECOME MORE COMPLICATED, VOLATILE, AMBIGUOUS, AND UNCERTAIN, MAKING THE PACE OF CHANGE FASTER AND THE NEED FOR MORE EFFECTIVE RESPONSES. IN PRACTICAL TERMS, ORGANIZATIONS MUST EVOLVE OR ADAPT IN RESPONSE TO CHANGING NEEDS AND CIRCUMSTANCE. THIS MEANS THAT THE PEOPLE, PROCESSES, SYSTEMS, AND INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT MUST BE CONSTANTLY MODERNIZED TO REMAIN IN TUNE WITH OR ADAPT TO CHANGING TIMES. SO, TOO, MUST THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION. THAT MEANS THAT THE SYSTEMS AND THE SKILL SET OF THE PEOPLE WHO OPERATE AT THE COMMISSION, MUST BE CONSTANTLY ENHANCED AND MODERNIZED. WITH THAT SAID, TRAINING FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION MUST BE GIVEN TOP PRIORITY. THAT WILL BE ANOTHER PART OF MY VISION FOR THE COMMISSION.

AS I AM SPEAKING ABOUT MY VISION FOR THE COMMISSION, LET ME SEGUE INTO WHAT I HAVE DEEMED AS MY SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM GOALS OF THE COMMISSION.

SHORT TERM

- 1. TO ACQUIRE THE NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE TO UNDERSTAND THE GAMING INDUSTRY FROM A REGULATORY STANDPOINT.**

2. TO HELP ENSURE THAT THE PROPER INTERNAL CONTROLS ARE IN PLACE AND CONSISTENTLY ADHERED TO IN ORDER TO AVOID THE LOSS OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE.

3. ADVOCATE FOR THE REQUIRED STAFFING TO CARRY OUT THE MANDATE.

4. AS THE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIVISION OF GAMING ENFORCEMENT (DGE) ARE CRITICAL AND EXTENSIVE, I WILL SEEK TO STRENGTHEN THE DGE SO THEY CAN ADEQUATELY PERFORM THEIR DUTIES IN A TIMELY MANNER.

LONG TERM

1. ALONG WITH OTHER COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF, DETERMINE AND DEVELOP THE TOP PRIORITIES AND LONG-TERM PLANS FOR THE COMMISSION.

2. OUR LAWS WERE PROMULGATED OVER TWENTY (20) YEARS AGO, SO THE CURRENT STATUTES AND REGULATIONS NEED TO BE REVIEWED TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IF NEEDED, ADJUSTED TO ALIGN WITH THE CURRENT INDUSTRY PRACTICES.

3. WORK TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE SITUATION OF PROBLEM GAMBLING AS THIS SITUATION DAMAGES FAMILIES EMOTIONALLY AND FINANCIALLY. (IT IS INSTRUCTIVE TO NOTE THAT THE MONTH OF MARCH IS PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS MONTH.)

CONCLUSION

AS I COME TO A CLOSE, I WANT TO REITERATE TO YOU THAT MY VAST EXPERIENCE IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS HAVE PREPARED ME FOR THE CHALLENGES OF SERVING ON THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION. MY VAST KNOWLEDGE OF ECONOMIC ISSUES FURTHER ENHANCES MY PREPAREDNESS TO SERVE. I BELIEVE THAT MY CAREER AND EXPERIENCE,

INCLUDING MY MANY YEARS IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS HAVE PROVIDED ME WITH THE INSIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING TO EFFECTIVELY PLAY MY ROLE AS A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THESE EXPERIENCES WILL ENHANCE MY ABILITY TO CARRY OUT MY DUTIES AS A MEMBER OF THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION AND WILL ALLOW ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE ANY POLICIES THAT PROMOTE A HEALTHY GAMING ENVIRONMENT IN ST. CROIX. MY MANY YEARS SERVING ON THE PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION WILL HELP ME UNDERSTAND THE WORKINGS OF A REGULATORY BODY AND TO BALANCE THE ECONOMIC INTEREST OF AN ENTITY AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

SHOULD I BE FORTUNATE TO BE CONFIRMED BY THIS BODY, I COMMIT TO YOU AND THE PEOPLE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS THAT I WILL DO ANYTHING WITHIN MY GOD GIVEN POWER TO MAINTAIN THAT STANDARD AND LIVE UP TO THE HIGHEST ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES AS A MEMBER OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION. I ASK THAT YOU CONSIDER THE MERITS OF MY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS AND ALLOW ME TO SERVE AGAIN WHERE I CAN CONTRIBUTE IN A MEANINGFUL WAY TO THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION AND, BY EXTENSION, THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS.

IN CLOSING, I WISH TO EXPRESS MY THANKS TO THE HONORABLE GOVERNOR ALBERT BRYAN, JR. AND THE HONORABLE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR TREGENZA ROACH FOR THE CONFIDENCE THEY HAVE SHOWN IN MY ABILITIES AND SUITABILITY TO BE A MEMBER OF THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION, RESPECTFULLY, WITH YOUR ADVICE AND CONSENT.

I LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING AND GETTING TO KNOW THE STAFF OF THE COMMISSION AND TO WORKING WITH THEM TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE AGENCY. I ALSO LOOK FORWARD TO FOSTERING A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DIVISION OF GAMING ENFORCEMENT (DGE) AND ITS DIRECTORS AND STAFF SO THAT WE WILL DEVELOP THE NECESSARY WORKING CULTURE TO CARRY OUT THE MANDATES OF OUR RESPECTIVE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

I MUST EXPRESS MY PROFOUND THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO THE MANY FRIENDS AND WELL-WISHERS WHO WROTE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION ON MY BEHALF TO THE GOVERNOR. MANY OF THEM WERE FROM STUDENTS I TAUGHT AT UVI, BUT ONE WAS ALSO FROM A STUDENT I TAUGHT AT GOOD HOPE SCHOOL. THAT WAS TRULY GRATIFYING. I THANK THEM FOR THEIR UNWAVERING SUPPORT DURING THIS PROCESS AND I WILL FOREVER BE GRATEFUL FOR THAT.

FINALLY, I WISH TO THANK YOU MADAM CHAIR, SENATOR DIANE CAPEHART AND THE MEMBERS OF THE RULES AND JUDICIARY, FOR CONSIDERING MY NOMINATION TODAY. I TRUST THAT YOU WILL FIND ME SUFFICIENTLY QUALIFIED. I THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR VOTE.

I AM NOW PREPARED TO RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.