



Testimony | Bill No. 35-0032

Good morning, Honorable Diane Capehart, Chairwoman of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary, committee members, non-committee members, the listening and viewing audience, colleagues, and the Division of Personnel team. My name is Cindy L. Richardson, Director of the Division of Personnel. Accompanying me here today is Attorney Aliya Felix and Assistant Director Florine Audain Hassell, in at Fritz E. Lawaetz Legislative Conference Room on St. Croix.

Thank you for the invitation to offer testimony on Bill No. 35-0032, proposed by Senator Marise James, an Act repealing and reenacting title 18 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 1, section 2, relating to government employees' eligibility for elected office, to allow government employees to run for political office while actively employed, unless specifically prohibited by federal or other laws.

As amended, the Division of Personnel stands in full support of Bill No. 35-0032. I commend Senator James for her due diligence in including the Division of Personnel and the Office of Collecting Bargaining in the discussions to strengthen this legislation. Both offices meet with Senator James back in March 2023, and offered some of the suggested changes seen in the amended version of this bill. Once the legislation is executed as intended, it will open the doors for competition and diversity for potential candidates who will not be hampered by stringent leave restrictions that can impact their personal funds in pursuit of public office.

Senators, once again thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this legislation that will benefit our mutual constituents. My staff and I stand ready to engage in discussions.