

Good afternoon, Committee Chair and other esteemed Senators, well guests, and the wider viewing and listening audience. I am Robert Schuster, a proud ninth-generation Crucian, and a Vietnam veteran. It is my honor to address you today in support of the recognition of my dear friend Salvador Sanpere. Before I delve into that important matter, I would like to take a moment to address an essential topic that is fundamental to our community's development. This scheduled hearing was originally organized with a focus on the Boardwalk, so let's reflect on the boardwalk's significance. The Christiansted Boardwalk was born from the revitalization of Kings Alley and the vision of a long-time resident of St. Croix, who sought to enhance Christiansted's appeal as a vibrant tourist destination. That has been accomplished. This beautiful boardwalk, crafted through dedicated efforts by the private sector and funded mostly through private resources, has become a cherished communal area, with plans to possibly extending it toward Gallows Bay. However, I have heard troubling rumors indicating that the National Park Service is standing in the way of extending the boardwalk along the seaside of the historic fort. The Virgin Islands government had previously ceded valuable land—once a bustling parking area for guests at the King Christian Hotel and Hotel on the Cay—to the National Park Service. This decision has created significant parking challenges for the guests of those two hotels and has somewhat disrupted the flow of commerce in our community and the vibrancy of our once very active wharf area. The National Park Service operates with a mission that includes: - Preserving the unique natural and cultural resources of our cherished areas - Ensuring these important resources remain available for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of both current and future generations – Suppose to collaborate with partners to amplify the benefits of conservation and outdoor recreation - Aiding communities in preserving their local history and celebrating their rich

heritage. Moreover, the removal of most seating along the picturesque waterfront has also diminished the area's allure. Today, the boardwalk is illuminated at night by VIGL, a private company, rather than by the government. During power outages, the serenity of the boardwalk is preserved by power from the generator's at the Caravelle Hotel and Casino, ensuring safety and visibility. Any incidents of criminal activity occurring along this cherished pathway are monitored by the hotel's surveillance cameras, underscoring the private sector's commitment to the well-being of both visitors and locals. As such, the pleasure that our community and tourists experience while enjoying the boardwalk largely stems from the diligent efforts of the private sector. Our territory has faced challenges in planning effectively in the past and has, unfortunately, squandered valuable resources. As we move forward, it is crucial that our planning efforts not only address individual needs but also create solutions that cater to multiple needs simultaneously. For instance, there are intentions to dredge the Christiansted Harbor. A pressing question remains: where will the tailings be deposited this time and will they be made reusable to enhance our harbor and maritime environment, such as for fill behind bulkheads that could support mega yachts or build a breakwater to minimize wave action into our harbor due to our seasonal Christmas winds? I am just sowing some seeds to see if any do sprout in the near future. Again, food for thought. Now to the occasion at hand.

I was honored to be asked by a couple of Senators to say something at the commendation of my friend, Salvador Sanpere. Mind you, I was not told whether to say something good or something bad but I was at my whitsend trying very, very hard to put these words together and I just couldn't find anything very bad to say about Sal. You see Sal showed up on St. Croix back in

1961 young and enthusiastic, full of an adventure spirit, and was captivated by the island's charm. Just ask his wife she will not lie for him. Those who have had the privilege of knowing Sal truly appreciate his impact on our community. Sal has dedicated himself to every endeavor he undertakes, demonstrating remarkable resilience in the face of multiple personal adversity. His unwavering commitment has been instrumental in achieving numerous accomplishments. One of his most significant achievements was the redevelopment of the Howard Wall Boy Scout Camp and its facilities, which transformed it into a model for other state organizations. Sal has consistently demonstrated his dedication to charitable causes, raising funds for various organizations, even including needy government agencies, when necessary. His unwavering support has been instrumental in assisting the Virgin Islands Police Department with its myriad needs that helped sustain its service to this community. However, Sal's most notable contribution is his annual participation in the Christiansted Christmas Boat Parade. His efforts ensure that the fireworks display that captivates St. Croix during the holiday season is a resounding success. This event draws thousands of Crucians and visitors alike, contributing to the island's vibrant Christmas atmosphere. Sal's contributions to the development and growth of St. Croix have been invaluable, and his legacy will continue to inspire future generations.

If I were to enumerate all of his contributions to this community, it would warrant the composition of a new none religious epistle, complete with chapters and verses. What I thought was going to be a chore did not stress my memory bank as it was so easy to compose these words. In all honesty I couldn't find any one bad thing I could say about Sal. To Jeanne you

caught a good one so many, many years ago and you manage to hold on. That's say a lot because they this all together. This convocation of individual within these walls only two days before the boat parade to an individual who was instrumental in such an annual event is most deserving and to witness Sal being recognized in such a manner is more than righteous. Anyone who dedicates five and a half decades to St. Croix, more than half a century, speaks volumes about his commitment. Sal, you should feel especially proud that this occasion is a recognition from your peers, colleagues, and those whom you have so graciously assisted as a way of expressing gratitude for all that you have done. I also want to personally express my gratitude for your unselfish dedication to St. Croix. This act in this chamber serves as a testament to your commitment and dedication to our community. I hope this occasion also serves as an encouragement for others to take up the mantle and continue Sal's noble practice of raising funds for local needy causes. Sal, I know we have our own mutual senior moments and forget things now and then, but they are well-earned and I am not presently having a senior moment or hallucinating but enjoying this. You need to be properly roasted. Un abrazo y bien hecho mi amigo.