Good day Chairman Bolques, Vice Chair Joseph, and members of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports, and Parks. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

As the temporary promoter, SGVI has been working to support the return of horse racing following a period of seven years of inactivity. Rebuilding this industry involves restoring infrastructure readiness, encouraging participation from owners and trainers, and renewing public engagement and confidence. This work requires planning, investment, and coordination.

SGVI has repositioned the Clinton Phipps Sr. Racetrack as a community centered destination. We have hosted themed race days such as Salute to Veterans, the St. John Celebration, and additional seasonal events including Festive Finish, which features family activities and free admission for children. We have focused on developing family friendly race days with bounce houses, live entertainment, and opportunities for local vendors. To date, SGVI has hosted nine race dates, and as we enter the 2026 racing season, we are scheduled to host our tenth race date on March 8, 2026.

Live racing on its own does not always generate the level of participation needed to sustain operations, nor does it fully fund the costs associated with operating the racetrack. For that reason, SGVI has focused on making race day a vibrant, “must go” community experience, with amenities and activities designed to drive consistent attendance whether or not racing is an attendee’s primary interest. The goal has been to build participation from local residents and visitors alike.

Safety is a priority for SGVI, and we have taken deliberate steps to ensure race days are safe and orderly. We have heard from members of the community who expressed concerns about unruly behavior at past race events, and we took those concerns seriously. These steps include increased uniformed security on both the grandstand and stable sides, dedicated coverage for back of house operations including horsemen and vendor areas, and expanded video surveillance. We have also implemented controlled access at entrances and service gates to limit unauthorized movement, added parking lot security and patrols to support safe arrival and departure, and put crowd monitoring controls in place to address issues early. These efforts are supported by clear separation between public and restricted areas and close coordination with on site staff to maintain a safe and welcoming race day environment.

All construction needed for current operations at the Clinton Phipps Sr. Racetrack has been completed, and the facility has been formally turned over to the Government of the Virgin Islands. There are no outstanding construction items, permitting issues, funding gaps, logistical obstacles, or interagency coordination challenges affecting current operations. Any future construction would relate solely to optional enhancements that could be considered if SGVI were designated as the permanent promoter, such as a children’s park, permanent Jumbotron infrastructure, family amenities, or event infrastructure. Revenues from past racing events are being presented to the Committee and are available for review.

We have expanded access beyond the USVI by coordinating with a British Virgin Islands transportation vendor to provide ticketing and shuttle options for visitors. We also work with the Department of Tourism to promote race events through its website and are currently working with a major resort brand to bring the racing calendar of events directly to their guests.

We also offer a wide range of racing experiences, from general admission and stadium seating to VIP trackside dining and luxury box suites, giving families and visitors multiple ways to enjoy race days.

Carnival races have long been a significant and respected part of Carnival, including as the home of the Governor's Cup. Under SGVI's promotions, we have focused on honoring that tradition while enhancing the experience through improved amenities, event structure, and overall race day operations designed to elevate the event.

The redevelopment of the racetrack was recognized by the St. Thomas and St. John Chamber of Commerce, and SGVI was honored with the Excellence in Design and Community Investment Award.

SGVI remains committed to restoring horse racing as a viable cultural, recreational, and economic activity for the Territory and to working collaboratively to ensure continued responsible operations.