



**UNITED STATES
VIRGIN ISLANDS**
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**Testimony before the Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture
36th Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands
Block III
August 10, 2026**

Good Afternoon, Honorable Senator Hubert Frederick, Chairman of the Committee on Economic Development & Agriculture; distinguished members of the Committee; Senators of the 36th Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands; legislative staff; members of the media; and the listening and viewing public.

I am Assistant Commissioner, Marketing and Communications, of the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism. Pursuant to your invitation, I am submitting the following testimony into the record regarding Bill No. 36-0285, "An Act amending Title 3, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 19, to establish the Virgin Islands Hall of Fame Registry within the Department of Tourism."

The Department of Tourism supports the intent of this legislation and agrees that the accomplishments of distinguished Virgin Islanders deserve recognition, preservation, and celebration. The proposed Hall of Fame Registry has the potential to strengthen civic pride, preserve important historical contributions, create educational opportunities for future generations, and enhance cultural heritage tourism by sharing the stories of individuals who have shaped the history and identity of the Virgin Islands.

Visitors increasingly seek authentic cultural experiences, and the achievements of Virgin Islanders represent an important part of the Territory's story. A thoughtfully developed Registry could serve as a valuable educational and tourism resource while ensuring that the contributions of notable Virgin Islanders remain accessible to residents and visitors alike.

While the Department supports the concept, we believe additional planning, structure, funding, and interagency collaboration are necessary before implementation. The creation of a comprehensive Hall of Fame Registry extends beyond tourism promotion and requires expertise in historical preservation, archives, education, research, and cultural stewardship.

The Department notes that the Legislature previously passed legislation supporting the establishment of the Virgin Islands Cultural Heritage Institute and assigned responsibilities to the Department related to its development. However, despite efforts, the Institute has not been able to be fully operationalized or funded to date.

The Department believes the proposed Registry presents an opportunity to revisit these broader cultural preservation objectives and develop a framework that ensures the accomplishments of Virgin Islanders are preserved in a meaningful and sustainable manner. Their stories deserve more than a simple registry; they deserve documentation, interpretation, and educational resources that can inspire future generations and serve as a lasting record of their contributions.



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Accordingly, the Department recommends further consideration of several implementation issues, including nomination and selection criteria, governance and oversight, funding mechanisms, maintenance responsibilities, and stakeholder participation. We also recommend the establishment of an advisory body that includes representatives from relevant government agencies, cultural institutions, historians, educators, and community stakeholders to help guide the Registry's development and ensure broad representation and historical accuracy.

With appropriate planning, resources, and collaboration, the Virgin Islands Hall of Fame Registry has the potential to become a meaningful cultural, educational, and tourism asset for the Territory. The Department stands ready to work with the Legislature and our partner agencies to help develop a model that appropriately honors the remarkable individuals whose achievements have shaped the Virgin Islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.