



Chrystie Payne
Regarding My Brother's Workshop
March 4th, 2025

Good Morning Chairman Kurt Vialet, Senator Avery Lewis, Senator Dwayne DeGraff, Senator Kenneth Gittens, Senator Marise James, Senator Franklin Johnson, and Senator Carla Joseph,

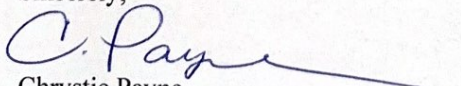
My name is Chrystie Payne. I am the Program Director for My Brother's Workshop. Our organization works with at-risk and high-risk youth in the US Virgin Islands, providing hope, healing, and purpose through our holistic approach of mentorship, education, counseling, on-the-job training, and job placement. We provide workforce development at our woodworking shop on St. Croix, a workshop on St. Thomas, a café on St. Thomas, and a new campus that houses an industrial kitchen, event space, classrooms, café, and offices. To date, we have worked with over 1,600 trainees (both male and female) and serve around 100 young men and women annually.

Workforce development plays a crucial role in providing young people with the skills and opportunities they need to build successful, fulfilling careers. By offering training, mentorship, and job readiness programs, workforce development helps bridge the gap between education and employment, ensuring that young individuals are equipped to enter the job market with the necessary tools to thrive.

Furthermore, workforce development serves as a powerful deterrent to crime and incarceration. When young people have access to meaningful work and a clear path toward career advancement, they are less likely to resort to risky or illegal behavior in an attempt to find purpose or financial stability. Providing these opportunities reduces the likelihood of young people becoming involved in the criminal justice system, offering them a better chance at building a productive, law-abiding life. In this way, workforce development is not just an investment in a young person's career—it's an investment in their future, contributing to stronger, safer communities for all.

I look forward to any questions the committee may have on the MBW programs and any discussions on ways to partner and have a greater impact in the Virgin Islands.

Sincerely,


Chrystie Payne
Program Director

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