

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

BILL NO. 36-0067

Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

March 28, 2025

An Act amending title 17 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 5 by adding a section 41j requiring the Pledge of Allegiance and the Virgin Islands Motto to be recited at the beginning of each school day in public schools, but additionally provides that students may opt out of the recitation

PROPOSED BY: Senator Alma Francis Heyliger

WHEREAS, fostering a culture of kindness, mindfulness, and respect among students is essential to building a strong, united, and compassionate Virgin Islands community;

WHEREAS, reinforcing these values in educational settings promotes not only academic success but also the development of character, integrity, and empathy in our youth;

WHEREAS, the absence of traditional prayers in schools has created an opportunity to introduce meaningful affirmations that inspire students daily to be responsible citizens of the Virgin Islands; and

WHEREAS, the introduction of a Virgin Islands motto to be recited in schools aims to instill pride, unity and a sense of belonging among students by highlighting shared community values; Now, Therefore,

1 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:*

2 **SECTION 1.** Title 17 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 5 is amended by adding the following
3 section 41j.:

4 **“§ 41j. The Virgin Islands Motto**

5 (a) At the beginning of each school day, all public-school students must recite the
6 Pledge of Allegiance followed by the Virgin Islands Motto, as follows:

7 ‘Let love, honor, and respect guide our way

8 Always be mindful of what we think, do, or say

9 Be kind to all others, no matter great or small,

10 United we stand, one Virgin Islands, proud and tall.’

11 (b) Notwithstanding subsection (a), any student may opt out of participating in the
12 recitation for personal, religious, or philosophical reasons without penalty.”

13 **BILL SUMMARY**

14 This bill requires all public-school students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and the
15 Virgin Islands Motto at the beginning of each school day and provides that a student may opt
16 of the recitation without incurring a penalty.

17 **BR25-0471/March 25, 2025/SLR/Revised/March 26, 2025**