

THE HONORABLE SENATOR AVERY L. LEWIS

Legislative Secretary

36TH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS



Chair: Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, Consumer Protection

Vice Chair: Committee on Education and Workforce Development

Member: Committee on Rules and Judiciary

Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, and Parks

Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety

Committee of the Whole

September 22, 2025

Location: Frits E. Lawaetz Legislative Conference Room, St. Croix U.S. Virgin Islands

The Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection reviewed four bills. Senators heard testimony on **Bill No. 36-0061**, allowing GERS retirees re-employed at UVI to receive both annuity and salary under a separate plan, which drew broad support. **Bill No. 36-0102**, requiring local construction materials in government projects, gained backing for its economic benefits but raised compliance and cost concerns; the motion failed, and the bill remains in committee. The Committee also considered **Bill No. 36-0058**, honoring Dennis “Pumpa” Liburd Jr. with the Key to the Territory and a roadway naming, **Bill No. 36-0121**, renaming Peter Carl Limpricht Park in honor of the Ten Sleepless Knights, and **Bill No. 36-0107**, a resolution honoring and commending Dr. Alfred Anduze for his outstanding achievements in the medical field, all widely endorsed as cultural recognitions.

In Block I:

Bill No. 36-0061

*An Act amending Title 3, Virgin Islands Code, relating to Government Employees' Retirement System (GERS) retirees employed at the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI), to allow such retirees to continue receiving their annuity while also earning a salary, provided they participate in a separate retirement plan. **Proposed by Senator Carla J. Joseph***

Invited Testifiers were as follows:

- Mr. Angel Dawson, CEO, Government Employees' Retirement System (GERS)
- Dr. Safiya George, President, University of the Virgin Islands

Highlights of Testimonies:

Mr. Dawson testified that current law already allows certain UVI employees to benefit from retirement carve-outs and expressed no opposition to extending this option to retirees re-employed at UVI. Dr. George strongly supported the bill, noting that at least three employees are directly affected. She emphasized that the measure would reduce financial strain, support employee retention, and provide needed flexibility. Overall, both testimonies reflected strong

support for the bill, characterizing it as a practical measure to improve recruitment, retention, and financial security for employees.

In Block II:

Bill No. 36-0102

An Act requiring the use of locally manufactured construction materials in government-funded projects. Proposed by Senators Marvin A. Blyden, Angel L. Bolques, Jr., and Senator Avery L. Lewis

Invited Testifiers:

- Mrs. Lisa Alejandro, Commissioner, Department of Property and Procurement
- Mr. Derek A. Gabriel, Commissioner, Department of Public Works
- Dr. Haldane Davies, Director, Virgin Islands Bureau of Economic Research (BER)
- Mr. Donald Stevens, Partner, Cat5 Builders, LLC
- Mr. Eric Castro, Owner, Universal Concrete
- Ms. Yvette Williams, Manager of Accounting, Heavy Materials
- Mr. Dion Alibocas, General Manager, Masters Concrete VI
- Mr. Eugene Jones, Executive Director, V.I. Housing Finance Authority

Highlights of Testimonies:

CAT5 Builders expressed strong support, citing potential for job creation and reduced dependence on imports. The Department of Property and Procurement and the Department of Public Works raised concerns regarding compliance with federal funding rules, oversight, and balancing costs.

The Bureau of Economic Research supported the spirit of the bill, pointing to economic and environmental benefits, but recommended clearer definitions. The Housing Finance Authority echoed support for the goal but cautioned about challenges with local capacity, costs, and compliance. They urged the inclusion of market studies, transparent exemption processes, and protections for small businesses.

Committee Action:

Although there was consensus on the bill's intent, the motion to advance failed. Bill No. 36-0102 remains in Committee.

In Block III:

Bill No. 36-0058

An Act honoring Dennis "Pumpa" Lennox Leroy Liburd Jr. by awarding him the Official Key to the Territory and naming the main entrance of 6-Y Peters Rest Road in his honor.

Proposed by Senators Marise C. James and Avery L. Lewis

Invited Testifiers:

- Mr. Kai Hendricks, Community Advocate
- Mr. Ian Turnbull, Marketing Strategist and Cultural Curator

Highlights of Testimonies:

Mr. Hendricks praised Pumpa for his athletic discipline, community involvement, and international musical success, describing him as a cultural ambassador rooted in St. Croix. Mr. Turnbull highlighted Pumpa's professionalism, artistry, and inspirational role for Virgin Islands youth. He emphasized that the Key to the Territory recognizes Pumpa's resilience, cultural pride, and living legacy. Both testimonies strongly supported the measure, affirming

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that Puma is more than a Soca artist, he is a cultural leader and ambassador of the Virgin Islands.

BLOCK IV

Bill No. 36-0107

A Resolution honoring and commending Dr. Alfred Lee Anduze for his outstanding achievements and significant contributions to medicine, science, public health, and community empowerment. Proposed by Senators Kurt A. Viatore and Senator Avery L. Lewis

Invited Testifiers:

- Mr. Terrance E. Highfield, longtime close friend
- Ms. Jennifer Jackson, good friend and former UVI Chancellor
- Ms. Rita Dudley Grant, PhD, cousin
- Judge Patricia D. Steele, cousin
- Judge George W. Cannon, Jr., good friend
- Ms. Angela Torres McGhee, PhD, cousin
- Mr. Richard A. Schrader, Sr., mentor, patient & friend
- Mr. Frank Duggan, longtime close friend

Highlights of Testimonies:

Testifiers spoke with deep admiration for Dr. Anduze, reflecting on his legacy as a physician, scientist, and public health advocate. They highlighted his lifelong dedication to advancing medicine in the Virgin Islands, his pioneering role in public health initiatives, and his mentorship of students and colleagues. Personal testimonies from friends and family underscored his humility, compassion, and commitment to community empowerment. Collectively, the testimonies framed Dr. Anduze as not only an accomplished professional but also a beloved mentor, family member, and friend whose impact extended far beyond the medical field.

In Block V:

Bill No. 36-0121

An Act renaming the Peter Carl Limpricht Park in Christiansted to the "Ten Sleepless Knights (TSK) Park," in honor of the iconic quelbe band. Proposed by Senators Marise C.

Post Office Box 1690, Capitol Building, Charlotte Amalie, VI 00801

Phone: (340) 774-0880

Email: senatorlewis@legvi.org

*James, Clifford A. Joseph, Sr., Kenneth L. Gittens and Angel L. Bolques, Jr. Co-sponsor:
Hubert L. Frederick*

Invited Testifiers:

- Mrs. Vivian Ebbesen-Fludd, Crucian Cultural Group
- Commissioner Derek Gabriel, Department of Public Works
- Mr. Lauren “Larry” Larsen, President, Ten Sleepless Knights Inc.
- Mr. Vincent Roberts, Commissioner Nominee, Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation
- Former Senator Myron Jackson

Highlights of Testimonies:

Mrs. Ebbesen-Fludd underscored TSK’s cultural role and suggested additional recognitions, such as a roadway dedication. Commissioner Gabriel acknowledged TSK’s contributions and pledged DPW’s support. Mr. Larsen reflected on the band’s 55-year legacy, urging the use of their full name in signage. Commissioner Nominee Roberts framed the measure as cultural preservation, shifting recognition from colonial to local heritage. Former Senator Jackson placed the measure in historical context, calling it a “living monument” to honor TSK’s legacy while members are still alive. Collectively, testimonies characterized the renaming as a cultural affirmation that permanently embeds TSK’s contributions in Christiansted. On behalf of the Senator Marise C. James, a motion was raised by Novelle E. Francis Senator Novelle E. Francis to offer Amendment No. 36-526. The Amendment was voted upon favourably.

COMMITTEE ACTION: THE VOTE

Bill No. 36-0061: Passed

Bill No. 36-0102: Failed; remains in Committee

Bill No. 36-0058: Passed

Bill No. 36-0121: Passed as amended by Amendment No. 36-525

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members: Vice Chair Senator Novelle E. Francis, Senator Ray Fonseca, Senator Alma Francis Heyliger, Senator Kenneth L. Gittens, Senator Franklin D. Johnson, and Senator Carla J. Joseph

Non- Committee Members: Senator Kurt Viale, Senator Marise C. James, and Senator Hubert Fredrick