

January 20, 2026

Barbara A. LaRonde
P.O. Box 600306
St. Thomas, USVI 00801

Greetings Senator Avery Lewis, Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, Veteran Affairs and Consumer Protection, to the Senators of the 36th Legislature, and to all viewing and listening audience physically present or not.

My name is Barbara LaRonde. Among many other credentials, I am a native US Virgin Islander, US Army Veteran, a Community Activist, and a Registered Voter elected to the Board of Elections.

I come before you today in critiques of, and with compliments to Bill No. 36-0187 offered by Senator Franklin D. Johnson. After careful review of this bill and the amendments provided, I'd like to first thank Senator Johnson for taking this important step toward correcting what has gone very wrong. The duties and the responsibility of the VI Election System is to value, protect, and safely sound the voice of the Territories voters.

There has been much discussion over the request by the voting public for a ballot box, and the unlawful position of VI Election System by not providing such a ballot box. In fact the request made by the voting public demanding the option of a ballot box also insisted that their votes be counted where they are cast. This matter should not even be up for debate. In uphold federal and constitutional law, Title 52 USC 21081 commands voting by paper ballot, casting the vote and counting the vote where cast.

This may sound like a surmounting task. However, there are several states/ counties that uphold the law by providing paper ballots and hand counting of these ballots in place where they are cast. Minnesota, New Hampshire, Ohio, Vermont and Wisconsin are just a few of the states that today continue to respect the wishes of the voters.

The sample ballot of 2022 provided by Supervisor of Election clearly displays the repeated violations, and improper creation of our local ballots that continue have the federal candidate on the local election ballot when FEDERAL law Title 48 USC 1712 says separate ballot is required. This is one of the reasons I along with several others have taken the Supervisor of Elections to Federal Court. (CASE NO. 1:24-cv-03398)

The challenge within our Election System isn't the clarity of the law, it's the acknowledgement and enforcement.

I stand in support of Bill No. 36-0187 for the clarity that other require and look forward to its enactment.

Respectfully

Barbara A. LaRonde