The Government Employees' Retirement System of The Virgin Islands

Presentation
to
The Committee on Government Operations, Veteran Affairs and Consumer Protection

The Thirty-Sixth Legislature of The Virgin Islands

September 22, 2025
Earl B. Ottley Legislative Hall
St. Thomas, Virgi Islands

Good morning.

I am Angel E. Dawson, Jr., Administrator and Chief Executive Officer of the Government Employees' Retirement System of the Virgin Islands. Pursuant to Senator Avery Lewis' invitation of August 18, 2025, I am here today to testify on Bill No. 36-0061, as proposed by Senator Carla J. Joseph.

Bill No. 36-0061 proposes to allow retirees who are receiving an annuity from the Government Employees' Retirement System, who are subsequently employed by the University of the Virgin Islands, to continue to receive their GERS annuity while receiving their salary from the University, if the retiree enrolls in a different retirement plan.

Title 17 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 33, Section 457, Paragraph (b) already provides that:

"All employees who hold permanent positions at the University shall be covered in accordance with provisions of the Employees Retirement System of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands; provided that teaching, administrative faculty and other personnel who are eligible for coverage by the Teacher's insurance and Annuity Association or other similar retirement systems may either join the Government Employees Retirement System or the Teacher's Insurance and Annuity Association or other similar retirement system, or if such employee has prior credited service in the Government Employees' Retirement System may upon employment with the University elect to remain in the Government Employees' Retirement System or join the Teacher's Insurance and Annuity Association or other similar retirement systems.

To the extent that this "carve out" already applies to the University of the Virgin Islands, Bill No. 36-0061 would merely extend it to persons retired from service within the Virgin Islands Government who possess professional characteristics desired by the University. Further, since Bill 36-0061 conditions such return to work at the University upon individuals enrolling in a "different retirement plan", the inference is that this is a measure to facilitate return to work of individuals qualifying as "teaching, administrative faculty and other personnel who are eligible for coverage by the Teacher's Insurance and Annuity Association or other similar retirement systems". Once again, since that "carve out" already exists for the University of the Virgin Islands, and Bill No. 36-0061 seeks to facilitate, presumably, beneficial return to work for the University, the GERS expresses no opposition at this time.

Thank you.