

TESTIMONY OF ANGEL VENTURA III (A.J. VENTURA)
IN SUPPORT OF BILL NO. 36-0320
A RESOLUTION HONORING AND COMMENDING KEVRÉ HENDRICKS

Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection
Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands
The Honorable Senator Avery L. Lewis, Chairman | September 28, 2026

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, distinguished Senators, and all those present.

My name is Angel Ventura III, professionally known as A.J. Ventura, and it is an honor and a privilege to appear before you in support of Bill No. 36-0320, honoring and commending my good friend, colleague, and fellow musician, Kevré Hendricks, for his outstanding contributions to the Virgin Islands.

While Kevré's record of service extends well beyond music, I come before you to speak about the man I have known through our shared musical journey—a father, teacher, mentor, bandleader, songwriter, producer, collaborator, and a man who has invested a significant part of his life in the musical development of our Territory.

Kevré is an exceptional multi-instrumentalist whose abilities speak for themselves. What makes his contribution especially significant, however, is that he has never treated his talent as something that belonged solely to him. **He has shared it.**

He has shared it with students, fellow musicians, and aspiring artists. Through more than two decades as a music educator in our public school system, he has helped pass the musical torch from one generation of Virgin Islanders to the next. Many of those he taught and mentored have gone on to become musicians, band directors, music teachers, educators, and community leaders themselves.

To me, that is one of the greatest measures of a person's legacy. A musician can write a great song. A band can win a competition. An artist can have a moment in the spotlight. But when the people you teach go on to teach others, your influence continues long after you leave the room. And Kevré has created that kind of legacy.

His contributions to Virgin Islands music are equally remarkable. Through Fusion Band and Black Empire, Kevré has earned twelve Road March titles—ten with Fusion Band and two with Black Empire. Those titles represent far more than trophies. They represent years of discipline, creativity, leadership, sacrifice, and commitment to the culture and musical traditions of St. Croix.

On a personal level, I have had the privilege of experiencing Kevré's musical brilliance firsthand. We are not only friends; we are frequent collaborators who have challenged, encouraged, and inspired one another creatively.

One project particularly close to me is the Nzuri Riddim, which we co-produced and which gave birth to “VI to the Bone.” **It became an anthem.**

That record reflects something Kevré and I understand deeply: Virgin Islands music is more than entertainment. It carries our experiences, our pride, our history, our culture, and our love for these islands.

Music is memory. Music is culture. Music is education. Music is identity. And music is community.

As remarkable a musician as Kevré is, there is something about him that deserves equal recognition today: his character.

Over the years, I have watched Kevré extend his knowledge, time, talent, and support to countless people within our musical community. He has done so generously—sometimes with recognition, sometimes without it, and sometimes without receiving the same generosity in return. **But he continued to give.**

That says something about a person. True service does not always come with applause or immediate reciprocation. Sometimes service is simply deciding that what you have to offer is valuable enough to share with someone else.

Kevré has repeatedly made that choice. He has helped musicians, encouraged young people, taught students, collaborated with his peers, and created opportunities. He has contributed to these islands because he believes in the culture and in the people who carry it.

You cannot put a number next to every young musician who became better because Kevré took the time to teach them. You cannot measure every student who found confidence through music. And you cannot calculate the value of the people who are now teaching others because someone once took the time to teach them. **But that is legacy.**

And I believe that is what Bill No. 36-0320 is truly about. Recognition such as this is not simply about celebrating what someone has accomplished. It is about acknowledging what someone has given.

Kevré Hendricks has given his time, knowledge, creativity, mentorship, leadership, and music. In doing so, he has helped strengthen the musical and cultural fabric of the Virgin Islands.

There is an old saying that a good teacher leaves a lasting impression, but I believe Kevré has done something even greater: **he has helped create other teachers.**

His students are now standing in classrooms, leading bands, teaching young people, making music, and continuing the very tradition of mentorship that he modeled for them.

That is how a legacy is built—not simply by what we accomplish ourselves, but by what remains in the people we have touched.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, as Kevré's friend, musical collaborator, and someone who has personally witnessed his talent, dedication, generosity, and influence, I can say without hesitation that he is deserving of this honor.

Kevré, your music has entertained us. Your leadership has inspired us. Your teaching has equipped us. And your mentorship has helped shape the next generation of Virgin Islands musicians.

You have not simply contributed to Virgin Islands music—you have contributed to the people who will carry it forward.

I respectfully urge this Committee and the Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands to support Bill No. 36-0320 and honor Kevré Hendricks for his meaningful and lasting contributions to our community, our culture, and these Virgin Islands.

Kevré, congratulations. This honor is well deserved.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee, for your time and consideration. May God continue to bless you, your families, and these beautiful Virgin Islands.

Good morning.

Respectfully submitted,



Angel Ventura III (A.J. Ventura)