

VI Board of Parole Testimony – Bill 36-0231

July 15, 2026

Good morning Honorable Senators,

My name is Dennis Howell, Chairman of the Parole Board of the Virgin Islands. The other active members are Mr. Pastor Chelsey Roebuck, Pastor, Doctor, Bentley Thomas and Mr. Roy Moorehead.

The Board of Parole thanks you for the opportunity to provide testimony and/or comment on the proposed Bill.

Today I am providing testimony on Bill 36-0231 an act amending Title V, VI Code subtitle 3, part iii chapter 401, by adding section 4507a to establish procedures for inmate transfers outside of the Virgin Islands.

The Parole Board is concerned with security, training, services and rehabilitation of inmates. Transfers to other facilities must take into consideration available services. Counseling and rehabilitation are crucial to inmates' re-entry into society. During interviews conducted at Parole Board Hearings (mostly off island), inmates complain of opportunities not available and their lack participation in certain programs for reentry and readiness to reside back in the community. Without these critical services and programs, some inmates often are not psychologically prepared to operate outside the prison environment.

The Bill as written will require further amending in terms of timeline and processes. I will acquiesce to the Bureau of Corrections, Attorney General and Department of Health to discuss the Multidisciplinary Case Review Committee composition and duties/responsibilities.

The Parole Board does not believe that the Director should have unilateral authority to send Virgin Islands inmates to other facilities outside the Virgin Islands. The Director and the Bureau should have procedures in place prior to transfers being made.

Checks and balances ensure a fairer approach to decision making. Transfers could be temporary or it could remain in place for the rest of the inmate's natural life. Decisions should not be made lightly.

I remain available to discuss with the committee.

Submitted by:

Dennis Howell
Chairman,
Parole Board of the Virgin Islands