

THIRTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE OF THE U.S.
VIRGIN ISLANDS
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY
Chairman: The Honorable Clifford A. Joseph Sr.
Virgin Islands Police Department
St. Croix, USVI
September 4th, 2025

BILL NO. 36-0105 (Sponsored by: Senator Clifford A. Joseph Sr.)

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Senate, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in this matter. I am Sean A. Santos Sr.; Assistant Commissioner of Police of the Virgin Islands Police Department present on behalf of Police Commissioner Mario M. Brooks, I submit this testimony in support of Bill No. 36-0105, an act amending Title 7 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 13, Subchapter III by Prohibiting the Possession, Sale, or Manufacture of Tetrahydrocannabinolic Acid, Delta-6 THC, Delta-8 THC, and Delta-10 THC Products in the Virgin Islands and for Other Related Purposes.

On behalf of the Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Bill No. 36-0105. I submit this testimony in support of Bill No. 36-0105, a measure that directly addresses the growing risks posed by synthetic and semi-synthetic cannabinoid products such as

tetrahydrocannabinolic acid, delta-6 THC, delta-8 THC, and delta-10 THC.

Public Health and Safety Concerns

National data underscores the urgent need for action. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), delta-8 THC and similar derivatives have not been evaluated or approved for safe use and are often marketed in ways that put public health at risk. Between December 2020 and February 2022, the FDA received over 100 reports of adverse events from delta-8 THC products, including hallucinations, vomiting, tremors, anxiety, dizziness, confusion, and loss of consciousness. More concerning, 55% of these cases required medical intervention, and 41% involved children or adolescents.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has also documented a significant rise in poison control center calls associated with these products. In just one year (January, July 2021), national poison control centers received over 600 calls related to delta-8 THC exposure, with 39% involving children under 18 years old.

Additionally, many of these products are manufactured with little to no regulatory oversight, leading to contamination with heavy metals, solvents, or synthetic byproducts. Such risks are compounded by misleading packaging, often designed to resemble candies, snacks, or other products attractive to youth.

By prohibiting the possession, sale, or manufacture of these products, the Virgin Islands will be aligning itself with more than a dozen states including Colorado, New York, and Kentucky that have already taken strong regulatory or prohibition measures to safeguard their residents.

Enforcement Concerns Under Current Draft

While the intent of the bill is commendable, its current framework vests primary enforcement authority in the Industrial Hemp Commission. With limited staff, no dedicated enforcement personnel, and insufficient budgetary resources, the Commission is not adequately equipped to serve as the sole enforcement body for this measure.

To ensure robust, sustained, and effective enforcement, we recommend that enforcement authority be explicitly shared across agencies that already have the capacity and statutory mandates to regulate, investigate, and protect public health:

1. **Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD):** Enforce the provisions of this bill, conduct investigations, seize illegal products, and provide the necessary law enforcement support.
2. **Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA):** Conduct business inspections, issue citations, impose fines, and suspend or revoke licenses for non-compliant establishments.
3. **Department of Health (DOH):** Oversee public health standards, enforce labeling and packaging requirements, and monitor reports of adverse health events related to these substances.
4. **Industrial Hemp Commission:** Retain oversight and permitting responsibilities to ensure consistency with existing hemp regulations and agricultural policies.

With all four agencies working together under this bill, we will have a strong and realistic enforcement plan one that protects the public, supports our local businesses that follow the rules, and ensures no single agency is left trying to do an impossible job alone.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Bill No. 36-0105 addresses a critical and emerging threat to the health and safety of Virgin Islanders. By both prohibiting the harmful and unregulated products outlined in the bill and strengthening enforcement authority through interagency collaboration, this Legislature has the opportunity to take decisive action to protect our community. This is not just about law or policy; it is about our people. It's about protecting our children from being targeted with unsafe products. It's about ensuring parents don't have to rush a child to the hospital because of something they thought was safe. It's about sending a clear message that in the Virgin Islands, we value the health and safety of our residents above all else.

I respectfully urge the members of the 36th Legislature to pass this measure with the recommended enforcement amendments to ensure it is both enforceable and effective.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to the well-being of the Virgin Islands.