

Nomination Testimony for Confirmation to the Virgin Islands Parole Board

SECTION 1: Opening, Acknowledgment, and Background

Good morning, Honorable Senator Carla J. Joseph, Chair of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary; Honorable Senators—Vice Chair Kenneth L. Gittens and esteemed committee members; Senate staff; my fellow testifiers; and the listening and viewing audience.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be considered for appointment to the Virgin Islands Parole Board by Governor Albert A. Bryan, subject to your advice and consent. This is a civic responsibility I am ready to fulfill. My commitment is to uphold a justice system that safeguards the public and, within the bounds of law, supports earned second chances. I recognize the trust that confirmation carries, and I approach it with humility.

I want to recognize the current Board members; Chairman Dennis Howell, Reverend Dr. Bentley Thomas, and Pastor Chesley Roebuck, for their steadfast service and leadership. They have kept the Board's work moving with professionalism and grace, often with limited resources and little fanfare. I am grateful for their example, and, if confirmed, I will work to support their efforts and help build a Board that is strong, secure, and fully equipped to meet its responsibilities. My goal is to be a prepared colleague who adds value and continuity to their work.

My first responsibility is to listen, understand current practices, and contribute, where I can be useful. I hope to meet with current Board members, the Bureau of Corrections, the Department of Justice, probation and parole officers, victim advocates, and community partners to learn what is working well and where I can support improvements. I will also seek to visit facilities and observe the workflow that precedes a hearing so that my contributions are grounded in the realities faced by staff and the public.

SECTION 2: Local Insight, Personal History, and Approach to Service

I am a proud Virgin Islander—a husband, father, veteran, and public safety professional. I was born on St. Thomas, graduated high school on St. Croix, and have spent my career serving the people who raised me. My experience gives me tools; it does not give me all the answers. I am prepared to learn and to earn the confidence of the Governor, this body, and the public.

At Havensight Mall, where I serve as Acting Property Manager and Chief Security Officer, my work is hands-on and community-focused: listening to concerns, coordinating with first responders, and helping businesses and families feel secure. In high-visibility settings with diverse stakeholders, I have led incident responses, developed policies and

procedures, and worked closely with law enforcement and medical partners to de-escalate difficult situations. These experiences in close-knit communities guide how I approach parole decisions, with respect for victims, adherence to the law, and a focus on community safety.

My approach is steady and plainspoken: prepare carefully, weigh the facts, document the reasoning, and decide without fear or favor. I believe people can change and take responsibility. My role, together with my colleagues, is to balance public safety with lawful opportunities for earned second chances. I will ask questions as openly as I share ideas, and I will accept correction when it is warranted. If a matter presents a conflict of interest or even the appearance of bias, I will step back in accordance with law and ethical standards. I am further committed to continuous training in parole decision-making, trauma-informed practice, and evidence-based reentry.

SECTION 3: Readiness, Risk, and Operational Goals

Parole is a public safety decision grounded in law, behavior, and demonstrated change. It is not a reward; it is a determination, based on the record, that supervised reentry is consistent with community safety and with the individual's readiness to comply. When accountability and readiness are shown, supervised reentry can work; when they are not, parole should be denied.

Sound decisions rely on thorough preparation. Case files must be complete, and eligibility verified. Institutional behavior and program participation should be documented, risk and protective factors assessed, victim input invited, and proposed supervision conditions made clear.

I also recognize the risks and pressures that come with this role, especially in serious or high-profile cases. That reality calls for clear procedures, appropriate safety protocols, and close coordination with our public safety partners. Board members should have access to legal support and protections. The process must also be structured to protect the well-being of staff, respect the needs of victims, and provide clarity for families involved.

If confirmed, my short-term goal, shaped by the Board's guidance, would be to support clear, consistent processes:

- Ensure quorum and legal posture are sound before hearings.
- Verify due process steps, eligibility, notice, and file access, with DOJ/BOC/counsel prior to scheduling.
- Use a standard pre-hearing checklist (complete file, verified eligibility, documented risk and protective factors) so decisions rest on a reliable record.
- Strengthen public notice and victim participation practices, including remote options, in alignment with existing policies and resource realities.

- Improve calendaring and communication so participants know timelines, appearance options, and expectations in advance.
- Document decisions clearly, stating the facts and factors relied upon, and providing appropriate redacted summaries where the law permits to support public understanding.

In the long term, I envision establishing a dedicated Parole Authority, an independent, fully staffed entity with the resources and operational capacity to manage case preparation, victim notifications, record-keeping, training, logistics, and statistical analysis. This administrative backbone, developed in partnership with this body and justice agencies, would allow Board members to focus exclusively on adjudication while professional staff handle support functions.

SECTION 4: Restorative Justice, Victim Engagement, and VINE

I believe in integrating tools that enhance accountability, transparency, and trust. Restorative justice is one such approach. Used in other jurisdictions, it centers the voices of victims, requires genuine accountability from offenders, and supports safer reintegration. Offenders must show they understand the harm they caused, take steps to repair it, and demonstrate readiness for a responsible return.

For victim engagement, I support adopting the Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) system, which provides automated, real-time alerts about hearings, releases, and transfers. This tool, already used in over 45 states and U.S. territories, would close communication gaps and give victims timely, reliable updates.

Equally important, victims and families must have a genuine opportunity to be heard before any release. Offenders seeking parole must show that they understand the harm caused and have taken meaningful steps to address it. Enhancements to this process should be shaped with input from victim advocates, DOJ, VIPD, and community partners, and co-designed with those most directly affected, including victims, families, and reentry providers.

To strengthen victim engagement, I propose three priorities:

- Implement or partner with a system such as VINE to deliver timely alerts for hearings, releases, transfers, or custody changes, with proper safeguards for data privacy and accuracy.
- Provide multiple avenues for victim input, live remote testimony, written statements, or pre-recorded remarks, regardless of hearing location, ensuring accessibility and inclusion for off-island participants.
- Establish clear, consistent public notice standards with sufficient advanced time for victims and communities to prepare and participate meaningfully.

Victim engagement must go hand in hand with reentry coordination. When parole is granted, the conditions should be clear, supervision expectations firm, and practical supports such as identification, housing, and workforce referrals in place before release. Accountability and support are strongest when delivered together, never as afterthoughts.

SECTION 5: Closing Commitment

If confirmed, I will measure my service by how well I listen, prepare, and decide each case on its merits. This is serious work with real consequences. I will judge each case on its merits—grounded in law, facts, and public safety. I will be transparent about what I can do as a Board member and candid about what must be addressed by our partner agencies.

Beyond policy and procedure, I also believe the Parole Board plays a role in something deeper: offering a sense of hope. For younger Virgin Islanders who may have made serious mistakes early in life, the parole process should reflect that change is possible, but never automatic. It must be earned and supported. When done responsibly, we offer not just a pathway back, but a reason to believe in something better. That, too, is public safety.

Thank you, Madam Chair and Members of the Legislature, for your time and consideration. I am grateful for the Governor's confidence in forwarding my nomination. I am committed to earning your trust and look forward to working with my colleagues on the Parole Board. I welcome your questions.