# Testimonial in Support of Gubernatorial Nomination

To the Honorable Senator Carla Joseph, Chair, and Esteemed Members of the Committee on Rules and the Judiciary  
Legislature of the Virgin Islands

Dear Senator Joseph and Members of the Committee:

It is with heartfelt humility and a profound sense of purpose that I submit this testimony in support of my nomination to the Board of Directors of the University of the U.S. Virgin Islands Research and Technology Park (RTPark). I am grateful for your consideration and the opportunity to serve my home in a way that honors both my roots and my life’s work.  
  
I am a proud son of the soil—a product of the Virgin Islands education system. My journey began in the Head Start Program at Eulalie Rivera Elementary School in Grove Place and continued through both public and private schools, including Charles H. Emanuel, Good Hope, Central High School, and St. Dunstan’s Episcopal, where I graduated in 1984. These early experiences shaped the values that continue to guide my life and career: service, excellence, and a commitment to community.  
  
I am also a veteran of the United States Army, where I learned to lead under pressure, serve with integrity, and embrace the idea that real leadership is about inspiring and lifting others. Today, I serve as Global Vice President of Revenue at Lucid Motors, a pioneering technology and electric vehicle company at the forefront of sustainability and innovation. My career has included senior executive roles with Toyota, Stellantis, Hyundai, and Genesis Motor America, where I helped build global businesses, lead high-performing, mission-aligned teams and most importantly, delivered results.  
  
Over the years, I have traveled extensively—more than 60 visits to Asia and dozens to Europe, Central America, The Caribbean and all but 3 of the 50 States—observing how bold, strategic investments can transform communities even within a single generation. I know that same potential lives within our Virgin Islands. On my most recent visit home (St. Croix), just six weeks ago, I had the privilege of witnessing one of RTPark’s STEM education programs in action. What I saw—young Virgin Islanders engaging with technology and possibility—filled me with pride and conviction. We have the raw talent, determination, and cultural infrastructure to become a research and technology hub for the Caribbean and beyond.  
  
If confirmed, I will focus first on:  
- Clarifying and strengthening RTPark’s brand, so its mission is widely understood across the Territory;  
- Attracting values-aligned businesses that can thrive in and contribute to our unique ecosystem;  
- Launching a local incubator to help Virgin Islands entrepreneurs develop, scale, and export their innovations;  
- And ensuring our people remain at the center of this growth, as creators, leaders, and direct beneficiaries.  
  
Long term, I envision RTPark becoming a magnet for opportunity, a platform for inclusive prosperity, and a global model of sustainable, innovation-driven development. I will also work to deepen the partnership between RTPark and the University of the Virgin Islands, expanding pathways from education to employment and from potential to purpose.  
  
I have previously served on the boards of UCLA Health Systems, Westport Fuel Systems, Dignifi Holdings, and Connected Television Group, and was honored to be appointed a U.S. Army Reserve Ambassador by the Commander of the U.S. Army Reserves. Today, I proudly continue to serve on The Ohio State University College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Advisory Board, and as Chair of The Lantern Network, a nonprofit I co-founded to empower underrepresented and underestimated youth through mentorship and career development.  
  
This work is not only about leadership—it is about legacy. It is about building something that outlives us and uplifts others.  
  
The Virgin Islands is on the cusp of something extraordinary, and I am ready to offer everything I have—my experience, my insight, my connections and my passion—to help accelerate this transformation. I believe in our people, our potential, and our future. And if given the privilege to serve, I will work tirelessly to ensure that the promise of RTPark is realized for generations to come.  
  
Thank you for your time, your trust, and your consideration.

Respectfully,

Erwin Raphael

Nominee, Board of Directors

University of the Virgin Islands Research and Technology Park