



DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS, PARKS & RECREATION
GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

8201 Subbase, Suite 206 • St. Thomas, USVI 00802 • (340) 774-0255

William D. Roebuck Industrial Park Bldg. 1 Suite 1 • Frederiksted, St. Croix USVI 00840 • (340) 773-0160

Vincent L. Roberts
Commissioner Nominee

Testimony
before the
36th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

Carla Joseph, Chairperson
Committee on Rules and Judiciary

Confirmation Hearing
Commissioner
of the
Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation

July 22, 2025

“We Commit to keep you fit”

Good morning to the Honorable Carla Joseph, Chair of the Thirty-Sixth Virgin Islands Legislature’s Committee on Rules and Judiciary, Honorable Committee Members of the Rules and Judiciary, Non-Committee Members Present, the hardworking staff of the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation, friends, family and the listening and viewing audience.

My name is Vincent Lubin Roberts, and I stand before you today humbled and honored to have been nominated for the position of Commissioner for the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation. This moment is not only a professional milestone but a personal one, rooted in a lifelong commitment to service, community, and the transformative power of sports. If confirmed, I look forward to working cooperatively with the legislature to

champion inclusive, innovative, and sustainable programs that reflect the needs and aspirations of our diverse communities.

First and foremost, I want to thank God for bestowing me with the grace and mercy to persevere thus far. I also extend heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the Honorable Governor Albert Bryan, Jr., and the Honorable Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach, Esq., for their vote of confidence in me to lead the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation.

Born and raised in the U.S. Virgin Islands, I take immense pride in giving back to the community that helped shape me. I come before you today as a dedicated public servant, molded by a village that instilled in me the values of faith in Christ, service to others, and the importance of family. My mother, Delrease Parson Roberts, taught me the power of empathy and often reminded me with the phrase, “This too shall pass.” My father, Lubin Vincent Roberts, showed me that every challenge has a solution—and that we should focus not on the problem, but on the solution. I also draw strength and inspiration from my heavenly angels—my grandmothers and my auntie Joyce Lebron, all of whom modeled what it means to care for your community with humility and love. I am grateful to my children—Ariel, Yanique, Justin, Jaalen, Jarien, and Jade—who continue to inspire me to push beyond my comfort zone and walk boldly in my purpose. And to my incredible family of aunts, uncles, cousins, and loved ones: thank you for pouring into me and helping to shape the person I am today.

From a young age, I developed a profound love for sports- whether playing, spectating, or simply watching on television. Growing up on St. Thomas, I immersed myself in many sports. Baseball, however, has always held a special place in my heart. It is through this sport that I learned discipline, teamwork, and leadership – values that have guided me throughout my life and career.

My early education took place at All Saints Cathedral School, followed by Charlotte Amalie High School, a proud member of the class of 1987. Upon completing high school, I pursued higher education at Miami Dade Community College, now known as Miami Dade College, in Miami, FL. In December 1990, I graduated with an Associate of Arts Degree in Business Administration.

After graduation, I returned home to work alongside my father in the construction field, “Lubin Roberts Construction Company,” and later on “Premier Construction Company,” utilizing my degree as the office manager for the company in charge of HR & Payroll divisions, accounts payable & receivables, preparing bid packages and construction schedules while gaining 15 years of valuable experience in business and the construction industry.

My journey with the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation began in April 2007, when I was hired by Governor John P. DeJongh Jr. as a sports coordinator, tasked to develop, schedule, and oversee sports and recreation programs for the St. Thomas/St. John/Water Island district.

Three years later, I was promoted to Assistant Director of Sports and Recreation. In this capacity, I lead the sports and recreation division in the St. Thomas/St. John/Water Island district, developing and implementing successful youth and adult programs, growing participation and engagement within the community. This promotion allowed me to work directly with Assistant Commissioner Mr. Stanley Smith, where I began to learn the inner functions of government and built strong collaborative relationships with local schools, organizations, and government partners.

In 2019, under the Bryan/Roach administration, I advanced to the position of Assistant Commissioner. In this capacity, I have played a major role in the department's disaster recovery projects, while concurrently supervising the daily operations of the Department in key areas such as oversight of the sports and recreation division and the division of facilities, parks, and open spaces. Taking charge of managing, directing, and prioritizing major projects and operational plans to ensure the synchronized achievement of departmental goals and objectives.

Beyond my work in government, I am an active member of the Nisky Moravian Church, a Little League coach for over 20 years, who was fortunate enough to win the 2007 Latin American Junior Little League Tournament and represented the US Virgin Islands at the Junior Little League World Series. I am also an active coach in the department's Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) program. Coaching has allowed me to inspire young athletes and help shape the next generation of leaders both on and off the field. Seeing former players owning businesses and sitting across from me in meetings fills me with a sense of accomplishment and pride.

Collectively, my upbringing, early experiences, as well as my current endeavors, serve to inform not only my intimate knowledge of DSPR but my character, leadership style, and vision for the future.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation (DSPR) of the United States Virgin Islands is a government entity established by the Virgin Islands Code to oversee the planning, development, and administration of recreational and sporting programs, as well as the maintenance and enhancement of public parks and recreational facilities across the

territory. Its creation, organizational structure, operational mandate, and jurisdiction are codified in Title 3, Chapter 18 of the Virgin Islands Code.

Title 3, Chapter 18, Subchapter I (Sections 301–308) lays the statutory groundwork for the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation, officially designating it as the central governmental body responsible for the management and advancement of sports and recreational activities in the Virgin Islands. This section defines the department's structure and functions, including the appointment of a Commissioner who serves as the executive head of the department, reporting to the Governor.

The statute outlines the department's core responsibilities, which include:

- Planning and administering sports and recreational programs for all ages.
- Developing and maintaining public parks, playgrounds, and athletic facilities.
- Encouraging youth engagement through organized leagues and instructional programs.
- Collaborating with schools and community organizations to expand recreational access.

The department is also empowered to promote health and wellness through physical activity and to preserve open green spaces that contribute to environmental sustainability and community development.

Title 3, Chapter 18, Subchapter II (Sections 311–324) introduces the Virgin Islands Sports Commission, a statutory body designed to complement the efforts of DSPR by focusing specifically on sports development at a higher administrative and policy level and attract sports tourism.

While Title 3 outlines the formation and governance of DSPR and the Sports Commission, additional legislative authority is provided under Title 32 of the Virgin Islands Code,

Chapter 1-21, which addresses specialized areas of sports, parks, and recreation management.

These chapters provide critical support for DSPR's mission by codifying complementary authorities and creating partnerships and frameworks necessary for effective recreation management and sports development across the Virgin Islands.

Key Legislative Acts and Budget Appropriations Supporting DSPR)

A landmark amendment, Act No. 8458, modernized and expanded the statutory responsibilities of DSPR by revising Section 302 of Title 3, Chapter 18. This amendment mandated the department to develop neighborhood and team sports parks in addition to its existing duties. Furthermore, the Act significantly restructured Chapters 22, 32, and 33 of the Virgin Islands Code, leading to the establishment of new revolving funds aimed at supporting park development and the reorganization of Territorial Park authorities for improved efficiency and governance.

The Act reflects the Legislature's commitment to increasing access to sports and recreation in underserved communities and supporting a more sustainable financial framework for facility management.

The Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation has undergone a remarkable transformation, from a division within a cultural agency to a standalone, community-centric department driven by a clear mission: "To enrich the quality of life for all Virgin Islands residents and visitors by providing safe, accessible, and diverse recreational programs and facilities that promote wellness, community engagement, and youth development."

The Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation is separated into three divisions, which include:

The Office of the Commissioner

Responsible for the overall leadership, management, planning, and supervision of the Department so that it may effectively carry out its mission. Which includes the offices of Human Resources and Payroll, Business and Finance, and plans and develops capital projects.

The Division of Facilities, Parks, and Open Spaces (DFPOS)

Oversees the maintenance and beautification of facilities, public parks, beaches, open spaces, and recreational areas under the Department's authority.

The Division of Sports and Recreation

Organizes, promotes, coordinates, conducts, and develops diverse sports and recreational programs to enhance children's lives and the general community. The department continues to offer diverse, unique, and fun programs to the community of all ages.

Modern Era & Vision for the Future

For the past six years under the Bryan-Roach administration, DSPR has experienced significant investment and development:

- Dozens of recreation sites rehabilitated or upgraded;
- Stronger community partnerships with local organizations, agencies, and federations;
- Expanded emphasis on inclusive programming, from senior fitness to adaptive sports.

Over the past few months, as the Acting Commissioner, I have engaged with the staff to become further acquainted with our internal processes and systems and scrutinized budgets to conduct a thorough assessment of the Department.

My evaluation indicates that the Department has been effective in fulfilling its mandate and mission of serving the residents of the US Virgin Islands and maintaining our resources. The Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation (DSPR) is home to a dedicated and knowledgeable staff, many of whom have devoted their entire careers to serving the community.

A key area for improvement is that our Marketing, Outreach & Community Engagement remains central to our efforts. I understand that an informed and engaged public is essential for our department's success. Therefore, in an endeavor to work more closely with the public, I plan to launch an aggressive marketing campaign strategy that includes a redesigned, user-friendly website with real-time updates to expedite the processes of facility availability, program registration, and permit access. I will reach the community via traditional platforms as well as increase social media presence, quarterly newsletters featuring project updates, staff highlights, and community stories. I will also organize bi-annual town hall meetings to gather feedback, share progress, and shape our priorities.

Employee morale is another essential aspect that needs attention, as it seems to be impacted by a lack of communication, inclusion in decision-making, and limited recognition of upward mobility opportunities. The Department must renew its focus on communicating effectively with employees. I believe communication, transparency, and morale are intertwined. By prioritizing open communication and fostering a culture of

transparency, I am confident that we will not only create a positive work environment for the Department's 113 employees but also build trust with the public.

Addressing these concerns will contribute to the overall improvement and efficiency of the Department. If confirmed as Commissioner, I will work with all stakeholders, including the hardworking men and women, on the following short and long-term goals:

SHORT-TERM GOALS

1. Revenue Generation Strategies for Sustainable Growth

To meet the evolving needs of our residents and maintain the high standard of facilities and programs expected by our communities, DSPR must ensure that its operational model is both financially sustainable and forward-thinking. I will lead the implementation of several key strategies designed to diversify DSPR's revenue base, reduce reliance on appropriated funds, and unlock the earning potential of the department's assets.

At the heart of this effort is adjusting current facility rental fees and lease agreements to reflect the fair market value of the services and spaces we provide, actively assessing underutilized sites for their potential to be upgraded and repurposed as revenue-generating assets.

Additionally, I will introduce advertising and sponsorship opportunities across department assets, providing businesses with positive exposure and community goodwill.

2. Workforce Development & Training:

To achieve my goal of boosting internal morale and recognizing that knowledge is power, I plan to institute annual training requirements for new and existing staff. I plan to conduct

regular training sessions for department staff on the latest recreation practices and safety procedures, and cross-train all employees to broaden their skills and promote a collaborative work environment. I will have staff attend conferences helps with networking, morale, and gaining knowledge.

3. Internal Efficiency and Cost-Saving Reforms:

Over the next year, I intend to introduce a series of efficiency improvements aimed at streamlining workflows, cutting unnecessary expenses, and strengthening the department's commitment to fiscal responsibility and community-focused services, as rising operational costs threaten our ability to meet our mandates. As DSPR continues expanding its programs and services to meet the needs of a growing, active community.

By improving internal systems today, we lay a stronger foundation for the programs, partnerships, and public spaces that will shape the Virgin Islands for generations to come.

4. Enhancing Public Safety and Compliance at DSPR Facilities

DSPR is increasingly confronted with challenges that threaten the safety, accessibility, and integrity of our public facilities. Among the most pressing issues are unauthorized vending, vagrancy, and crowd control violations, particularly at high-traffic beaches, park areas, and event spaces.

These challenges not only create safety and sanitation concerns but also compromise the user experience for the community and tourists who rely on these spaces for recreation, rest, and organized activities. To address these concerns, I am taking a proactive and coordinated approach by engaging key regulatory and enforcement agencies, including the Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD), the Department of Planning and Natural

Resources (DPNR), the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA), and the Administrator Office to establish clear, enforceable policies and procedures that will protect our facilities and the people who use them.

LONG TERM GOALS

1. Sports Tourism Development

As Commissioner of the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation, I aim to transform the U.S. Virgin Islands into a top destination for sports tourism, one that combines our rich cultural heritage, scenic beauty, and expanding athletic facilities to attract regional and international sporting events, boost economic activity, and promote local sports development. The Capital Improvement and Facility Enhancement Plan, which I will discuss next, is not only an investment in public health and quality of life but also a strategic tool for economic growth and tourism development.

I intend on activating the Sports Commission to meet its mandates, as well as continue working closely with the Department of Tourism to actively pursue partnerships with national governing bodies, sports federations, and private promoters.

2. Capital Improvement & Facility Enhancement Plan

I have led a comprehensive, territory-wide assessment of both major and minor facilities managed by the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation (DSPR). This effort was guided by a commitment to improving the quality, safety, and long-term viability of our public spaces. From this assessment, a robust Capital Improvement and Facility

Enhancement Plan was developed—one that reflects both immediate infrastructure needs and long-range opportunities for modernization and growth.

At the heart of this plan is a focus on four core pillars: safety, accessibility, usability, and sustainability. These principles will guide every renovation, upgrade, and new construction project initiated under my leadership.

Key Infrastructure Priorities

1. Secure On-Site Storage for Equipment

To prevent equipment loss, improve operational readiness, and eliminate inefficiencies caused by transport delays.

2. Renovations for Multi-Use Functionality

Our aging facilities must be reimaged for today's recreational demands. I will repurpose outdated or underused courts into multi-use surfaces capable of hosting multiple sports, maximizing community access, and encouraging diverse year-round participation.

3. Field Upgrades and Surface Renovations

Our ballfields and open play spaces are some of the most heavily used assets in the department, yet many are worn due to age and frequent use. Improving drainage, repairing fences, dugouts, and upgrading turf will be a priority.

4. ADA-Compliant Infrastructure and Permanent Vendor Zones

My vision includes ensuring that all new construction and renovations meet ADA standards. Equally important will be to establish permanent vendor zones at key facilities to promote economic opportunity and ensure a more orderly vendor presence.

5. Beautification and Signage Enhancements

First impressions are lasting impressions. I will launch a territory-wide beautification campaign to enhance the aesthetic appeal of our parks and recreation centers. This includes landscaping, public art, new signage, and the installation of shade structures at

playgrounds, courts, and bleacher areas—improving both comfort and visual appeal. These improvements will create a sense of pride and ownership among users while boosting the community atmosphere at our sites.

Investing in the Future

One of the longstanding goals of the department has been to construct dedicated DSPR-operated gymnasiums in both districts. These multipurpose indoor facilities would expand year-round programming opportunities, serve as safe havens, and provide essential space for youth, adult, and senior recreation. If confirmed as Commissioner, I fully commit to advancing this vision. I will work diligently to identify suitable locations and pursue funding opportunities through local appropriations, federal grants, and public-private partnerships to bring this vision to life.

The Capital Improvement and Facility Enhancement Plan is a blueprint for transforming our public spaces into thriving, inclusive, and future-ready centers of community life. I will continue to champion these improvements with urgency, transparency, and accountability.

A Department at the Heart of Community Life

Today, the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation is more than just a manager of facilities. I firmly believe it is a vital component of the social infrastructure of the Virgin Islands. DSPR provides safe spaces where residents of all ages and backgrounds can gather, grow, and thrive.

Our motto, “We commit to keep you fit,” reflects a renewed commitment to inclusion, innovation, and community engagement. The department’s work continues to support not

only athletic excellence but also social development, environmental stewardship, and cultural heritage, making it a cornerstone of public life in the Virgin Islands.

As Commissioner, I pledge to be a resolute and equitable leader, aspiring to be among the Department's most accomplished. Influenced by the wisdom of my father, a successful self-made entrepreneur, I commit to confronting challenges with a creative, solution-oriented, and collaborative mindset. Guided by the principles instilled by my esteemed mother, I vow to uphold persistence and justice in all endeavors. As a committed team player, I vow to foster an environment of open and honest communication, cultivating a transparent dialogue that, I believe, will afford employees unprecedented opportunities and propel DSPR into the future.

While I am aware that pleasing everyone is impossible, I am steadfast in my commitment to treating everyone fairly and ensuring that each voice has the opportunity to be heard. I approach my nomination with a deep sense of responsibility, seeking strength from God to consistently give my best effort.

I express heartfelt gratitude to my teammates at the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation. To my village, friends, colleagues, and the entire Virgin Islands community, thank you for always showing up and for your never-ending support and prayers.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to further discussing my vision for the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation with you and answering any questions that you may have.