

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

10/27/2025-REPORTED OUT TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY

BILL NO. 36-0075

Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

May 8, 2025

A Resolution honoring and commending Austin A. Venzen posthumously for his unwavering commitment to music education and the arts, through his work in the classrooms, conducting private music lessons, on the concert stages, and by bringing Virgin Islanders together in choirs, bands, and community events, to foster camaraderie, collaboration, and cultural enrichment

PROPOSED BY: Senators Ray Fonseca and Carla J. Joseph

1 **WHEREAS**, Austin A. Venzen, was born on St. Thomas in 1952 and is the son of the
2 late Petronita Foy and Ebenezer Venzen;

3 **WHEREAS**, he attended Jane E. Tuitt Elementary, Wayne Aspinall Junior High, and
4 Charlotte Amalie High School, from where he graduated in 1970;

5 **WHEREAS**, upon graduating from high school, he attended Central State University in
6 Wilberforce, Ohio, and Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tennessee, where, in May
7 1975, he earned a Bachelor of Science in Music Education and in August 1979, he earned a
8 Master of Arts in Music Education;

9 **WHEREAS**, he dedicated his life to music, music education, and community service,
10 making an indelible mark on the Virgin Islands and beyond through his innovative methods,
11 passionate teaching, and steadfast commitment to excellence in music education;

12 **WHEREAS**, Austin A. Venzen was instrumental in shaping the music programs at
13 Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School, Ivanna Eudora Kean High School, Charlotte Amalie High

1 School, and the University of the Virgin Islands, extending the impact of these programs
2 beyond school walls to the broader community, the Caribbean, and the United States;

3 **WHEREAS**, he served as a mentor and inspiration to countless students, instilling in
4 them a deep love of music and an appreciation for discipline, creativity, and hard work,
5 regardless of whether they pursued music as a profession;

6 **WHEREAS**, he was the founder of the Esquire Wind Ensemble, which performed
7 throughout the Virgin Islands for private and public events;

8 **WHEREAS**, Austin A. Venzen's unique and vibrant personality, coupled with his high
9 expectations and unyielding standards, left a lasting impression on all who worked with him,
10 creating a legacy of excellence, determination, and artistic achievement;

11 **WHEREAS**, his endeavors extended beyond traditional classrooms and concert stages,
12 bringing people together in choirs, bands, private lessons, and community events, where he
13 fostered camaraderie, collaboration, and cultural enrichment;

14 **WHEREAS**, Austin A. Venzen's contributions to music education and the arts were
15 recognized and celebrated through community productions and the initiation of the UVI
16 Summer Music Camp at the University of the Virgin Islands through its concert, jazz and
17 ensembles, which expanded to a band and opera camp;

18 **WHEREAS**, the establishment of the Austin A. Venzen Music Memorial Scholarship is
19 a lasting testament of the enduring affection and respect of his students, colleagues, and the
20 wider community;

21 **WHEREAS**, his life and work embodied the principle of stirring up excellence, inspiring
22 those around him to rise to his high standards and to carry forward his legacy of innovation
23 and passion;

24 **WHEREAS**, on May 15, 2020, Austin A. Venzen passed away in Nashville, Tennessee;

