



***THE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT
SYSTEM OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS***

**PRESENTATION
TO
THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY
OF
THE THIRTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE
OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES**

Bill No. 36-0132

An act amending Title 3 of the Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 27 by enacting the “Public Corruption Act” providing for the suspension of retirement benefits of government officials and employees, who are members of the Government Employee Retirement System, upon the conviction of any felony violating public trust and applying those benefits toward the cost of imprisonment and restitution.

**The Frits E. Lawaetz Legislative Conference Room
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands
September 10, 2026
1:00 PM**

Good afternoon, Honorable Carla J. Joseph, Chairperson of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary, other distinguished Senators in the chambers, and the listening and viewing audience. I am Ishmael A. Meyers, Jr, General Counsel of the Government Employees' Retirement System of the Virgin Islands ("GERS") and present with me is Ms. Shoran D. C. Sasso, Chief Benefits Officer. We are here appearing on behalf of Administrator Angel E. Dawson, Jr.

The GERS appreciates this opportunity to give testimony on the amendment of Bill No. 36-0132, a bill to amend Title 3 of the Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 27 by enacting the "Public Corruption Act" providing for the suspension of retirement benefits of government officials and employees, who are members of the Government Employees' Retirement System, upon the conviction of any felony violating public trust, and applying those benefits toward the cost of imprisonment and restitution.

The GERS was created on October 1, 1959 as a retirement and benefit system for officials and employees of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands and their dependents and beneficiaries, for the payment of retirement annuities, disability annuities, and other benefits as provided in the Virgin Islands Code to said officials and employees, and to their dependents and beneficiaries, after stated periods of service and upon fulfillment of certain conditions set forth in the Virgin Islands Code. This proposed legislation would direct the GERS to stop paying benefits for members convicted of specified crimes involving a violation of the public trust. The cessation of benefits would also apply to benefits payable to the members' dependents and beneficiaries. The System (GERS) has two principal concerns.

First, subsection (f)(1) on page 4 authorizes the Attorney General to notify the GERS of a member's conviction and request immediate withholding. GERS respectfully requests that the language be revised to provide that the Attorney General shall provide written notice to the

Department of Finance and the GERS upon **final conviction**. Requiring a final conviction would reduce potential litigation exposure for the GERS if a conviction is later overturned on appeal.

Second, the GERS is concerned about the cost of potential litigation arising from this legislation. Litigation is arduous and expensive, and, as a trust fund, GERS must preserve resources for the exclusive benefit of its members.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for allowing the GERS to participate in this hearing. I am available to answer any questions related to this topic.