COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

10/22/26-AMENDED AND REPORTED OUT TO THE FLOOR
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BILL NO. 36-0229

Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

February 2, 2026

An act honoring and commending Senator Adelbert M. "Bert" Bryan for his outstanding contributions and dedicated service to the Virgin Islands community, particularly on the island of St. Croix, to ceremoniously name Queen Street in Frederiksted, St. Croix, in his honor as "Senator Adelbert M. "Bert" Bryan Drive" and awarding him the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor

PROPOSED BY: Senator Kenneth L. Gittens
Sponsors: Angel L. Bolques, Jr., Franklin D. Johnson, Clifford A. Joseph, Sr., Avery L. Lewis and Marvin A. Blyden
Co-sponsors: Ray Fonseca and Novelle E. Francis, Jr.

WHEREAS, Adelbert M. "Bert" Bryan was born on August 21, 1943, in Frederiksted, St. Croix, to Wilmot Bryan and Anesta Samuel Bryan; and was raised on Queen Street in Frederiksted; and

WHEREAS, Bert's home on Queen Street was the meeting place for boxing, playing steel pan, baseball, marbles and other games; and he and his friends sailed home-made boats in the gutter during heavy rainfall; and

WHEREAS, as the only son among eleven sisters, Bert developed strong values of independence, discipline, and family responsibility that shaped his character and leadership; he learned a sense of community by watching his mother bake bread for the young people; and he learned to sew by watching his mother and sisters, then he used that talent to make shirts for himself and his friends; and

WHEREAS, Bert attended Frederiksted Public Grammar School, Frederiksted Junior High School, and Claude O. Markoe School, graduating in 1961 as a member of that school's first graduating class; and

WHEREAS, from an early age, Bert exhibited a deep love for animals – a passion that would continue throughout his life – and acquired skills in the vocational trades of plumbing, carpentry, masonry, and electricity through apprenticeships as a youth; and

WHEREAS, after graduating high school, Bert was drafted into the United States Army in 1961, where he received a secret clearance after completing advanced training as a communications specialist; and the rest of his military duty was spent in Germany, where he served honorably, participated in boxing and track and field, and was crowned the Welterweight Boxing Champion of the 8th Armored Division in 1963; and

WHEREAS, upon returning home in 1966, Bert joined the Department of Public Safety, now the Virgin Islands Police Department, rising through the ranks to become Police Captain, while earning an Associate Degree in Police Science from the College of the Virgin Islands in 1975, completing advanced training at the Federal Bureau of Investigation Academy in Quantico, Virginia, in 1978, and earning a Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences in 1988; and

WHEREAS, Bert successfully challenged institutional injustices during his law enforcement career, including a landmark victory before the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in *Bryan v. Government of the Virgin Islands*, 550 F.2d 890 (3d Cir. 1976), resulting in his reinstatement and promotion within the department; and

WHEREAS, as Police Captain, Bert ensured the viability and success of the Police Athletic League (PAL) for the youth of St. Croix by providing space, resources, and support, which included removing unnecessary obstacles that blocked the progress of the program, participating in bicycle ride-outs, helping with construction at the camp, organizing community activities, and playing a crucial role in the implementation of the very well-known and widely

enjoyed skating on Strand Street events, for which he received numerous commendations and was recently honored by PAL for his steadfast support over the years; and

WHEREAS, Bert shared his craftsmanship and creativity with the youth of St. Croix, teaching students to build local toys, scooters, and box carts, while emphasizing the importance of self-sufficiency and skill development; and

WHEREAS, Bert operated "Emancipation Farm" in Estate Lower Love, Frederiksted, where he raised livestock, exotic birds, racehorses, cats, and dogs, and hosted educational field trips for schoolchildren, blending his love for science, agriculture, and education; and

WHEREAS, beyond law enforcement, Bert dedicated his time and expertise to numerous community organizations, including Little League, Boy Scouts of America, the Juvenile Task Force, and the Virgin Islands Olympic Shooting Team; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Bert was elected to the Fifteenth Legislature of the Virgin Islands and subsequently served in the Sixteenth, Nineteenth, Twenty-First, and Twenty-Second Legislatures, where he championed legislation promoting land and home ownership, education, and social justice; and

WHEREAS, among his notable legislative accomplishments, Bert introduced and secured passage of Act No. 4844, mandating that Virgin Islands and Caribbean History be taught at all grade levels in Virgin Islands schools, an enduring testament to his commitment to cultural preservation and education; and

WHEREAS, as a legislator and advocate, Bert fearlessly challenged inequities, including a successful lawsuit against the Government and Department of Education in 1984 for the extremely poor conditions of the cafeteria, auditorium, and restroom facilities at Arthur A. Richards Junior High School; and

WHEREAS, he also introduced legislation to protect the rights of workers affected by industrial closures, such as those at the Hess Oil Refinery, demonstrating his enduring advocacy for the working class; and

WHEREAS, in 1986, Bert ran for Governor of the Virgin Islands with Dr. Gilbert Sprauve of St. John as his running mate, and although not elected, he continued to serve the people as a delegate to the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Constitutional Conventions of the Virgin Islands, and as a member of the Board of Elections, where he promoted electoral fairness, including a successful challenge to the ballot format before the Virgin Islands Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, Bert's influence extended through media and public discourse, as he regularly appeared on radio programs to engage the public, challenge injustice, offer solutions that would take effort and grit, impart knowledge about history and legacy in order to make informed decisions, and encourage civic participation, often concluding with his well-known maxim: "Keep your eyes on the prize, and don't blink."; and

WHEREAS, Bert holds the distinction of being the youngest person in Virgin Islands history to both attain the rank of and retire as a Police Captain (at the ages of 34 and 43 respectively), and the first native Virgin Islander to earn a Black Belt in Nisei Goju-Ryu Karate, placing him among a distinguished cadre of martial artists; and

WHEREAS, Bert has been married to Jerilyn Ovesen Bryan for 58 years whom he met on Queen Street and together they raised 3 children: Lecia, Adelbert, and Nikki; he is also the proud father of Lori, Andrea, Lyrhea, and Mia; he has been blessed with , eleven grandchildren: Jabir, De Andre, Al Andre, Andre, Kemia, Keandra, Earl, Khalid, Afiya, Carina, and Khyra; and he cherishes his great-grandchildren as the youngest generation of his family; and

WHEREAS, Bert has taught all his children and grandchildren many important values, to include self-awareness, independence, confidence, discipline, leadership, fairness, responsibility, dependability, perseverance, diligence, service to others, and dauntlessness; and he often ends telephone calls with them by saying "Stay Strong"; and

WHEREAS, Bert Bryan's legacy of service, courage, and commitment continues to inspire Virgin Islanders of all generations; Now, Therefore,

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:

SECTION 1. The Legislature of the Virgin Islands, on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands, honors and commends Adelbert M. "Bert" Bryan for his outstanding and enduring contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands, particularly to the people of St. Croix, in the fields of law enforcement, politics, sports, industrial arts, farming, education, social history, and community service.

SECTION 2. (a) In recognition of his lifelong service and dedication to the people of the Virgin Islands, particularly the island of St. Croix, the Legislature of the Virgin Islands hereby designates Queen Street, located in Frederiksted, St. Croix, to be also known as "Senator Adelbert M. "Bert" Bryan Drive.". This designation shall be honorary and shall not replace the historic name "Queen Street," which shall remain the official street name for all legal, postal, mapping, and historic preservation purposes.

(b) The honorary designation authorized by this section shall permit the installation of ceremonial or honorary signage recognizing "Senator Adelbert M. "Bert" Bryan Drive," provided that such signage is consistent with historic district guidelines and does not conflict with existing street identification or historic preservation requirements.

SECTION 3. The Virgin Islands Department of Public Works shall erect two signs bearing the inscription "Senator Adelbert M. "Bert" Bryan Drive", one at the beginning and one at the end of Queen Street in Frederiksted, St. Croix. The honorary signs shall be displayed alongside the existing Queen Street designation and shall not replace or obscure that designation. The installation of the honorary signs must comply with the historic district guidelines and historic preservation requirements referenced in section 2(b).

SECTION 4. (a) The sum of $10,000 is appropriated from the General Fund of the Treasury of the Government of the Virgin Islands for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2027, to the Virgin Islands Department of Public Works to carry out the provisions of this Act.

(b) The funds appropriated in subsection (a) remain available until expended.

SECTION 5. The Legislature of the Virgin Islands hereby bestows the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor upon Senator Adelbert M. "Bert" Bryan in recognition of his outstanding public service and his commendable, distinguished, and dedicated contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands through his service in the United States military, as a member of the Virgin Islands Police Department, as a member of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands, as a member of the Virgin Islands Constitutional Conventions, and as a member and chairman of the Virgin Islands Board of Elections, and his longstanding commitment to the advancement and well-being of the people of the Virgin Islands.

SECTION 6. The President of the Legislature, or the President's designee, shall present the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor and a perma-plaque copy of this act to Adelbert M. "Bert" Bryan at an appropriate ceremony honoring his service and achievements.

BILL SUMMARY

This bill honors and commends Senator Adelbert M. "Bert" Bryan for his exemplary service and numerous contributions to the Virgin Islands community, especially the people of St. Croix. It designates Queen Street in Frederiksted, St. Croix as "Senator Adelbert M. "Bert" Bryan Drive," appropriates funds for the installation of signage, awards him the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor and authorizes a formal presentation ceremony in recognition of his lifetime of public service.

BR25-0650/October 16, 2025/AA/Revised January 20, 2026/Revised January 22, 2026

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