**COMMITTEE ON OPERATIONS, VETERNAS AFFAIRS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

**10/22/2026-REPORTED OUT TO THE FLOOR**
**09/28/2026-AMENDED AND REPORTED OUT TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY**

# BILL NO. 36-0281

## Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

**May 8, 2026**

An act honoring and commending Hans Lawaetz for his lifetime of exemplary service to the Virgin Islands and awarding him the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor

**PROPOSED BY:** Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr.
Sponsors: Angel L. Bolques, Jr., Clifford A. Joseph, Sr., and Avery L. Lewis

**WHEREAS,** Hans Lawaetz was born in 1936 in Estate River, St. Croix; and

**WHEREAS,** Mr. Lawaetz attended St. Patrick's School in Frederiksted St. Croix for eight years before attending Westtown School in Pennsylvania where he played varsity soccer and was elected to serve as captain of the swimming and baseball teams and elected President of the Boys' Student Body; and

**WHEREAS,** in 1955, he graduated from Westtown School and attended Cornell University, where he was president of his fraternity, played varsity soccer for three years, and served as the highest-ranked Air Force cadet officer in the ROTC program; and

**WHEREAS,** during his college summers, he gained extensive agricultural experience working on ranches in Kansas, Colorado, and Florida where he worked with various cattle breeds; and

**WHEREAS,** in 1959, Hans Lawaetz graduated from Cornell University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Husbandry, now known as Animal Science; and

**WHEREAS,** from 1959 to 1964, Mr. Lawaetz served in the United States Air Force where he achieved the rank of captain and played fast-pitch softball for the base team; and

**WHEREAS,** in 1964, Hans Lawaetz returned to St. Croix with his wife, Judy, and daughter, Amy, to become the managing partner of Annaly Farms in partnership with his father, Frits E. Lawaetz, and Ward M. Canaday; and

**WHEREAS,** from 1964 to 1999 Hans Lawaetz worked with Annaly Farms Partnership to manage 1500 Senepol cattle and help develop the Senepol Breed to be popular in twenty tropical countries; and

**WHEREAS,** from 1965 to 2002, Mr. Lawaetz served as a board member of the Virgin Islands Conservation District where he served as president from 1965 to 1975 and from 1991 to 2002; and

**WHEREAS,** from 1965 to 2002, Mr. Lawaetz was elected to serve as a council member for the National Association of Conservation Districts where he served as a board member from 1968 to 1974 and as chairman of the Education Committee from 1971 to 1974; and

**WHEREAS,** from 1966 to 1972, Hans Lawaetz served as a Trustee for the Good Hope School and has been an honorary trustee since 1973; and

**WHEREAS,** in 1967, Mr. Lawaetz was a founding member of the St. Croix Horse Show Association; and

**WHEREAS,** from 1964 through the late 1960s, Mr. Lawaetz modernized Annaly Farms by terminating sugar cane operations, converting land to pangola grass, and implementing rigorous genetic record-keeping and weight-gain calculations to improve the Senepol cattle herd; and

**WHEREAS,** in 1971, Hans Lawaetz served as the first swim coach to take a team off-island and became a founding member of the St. Croix Swimming Association; and

**WHEREAS,** in 1972, Mr. Lawaetz oversaw the groundbreaking and five-month construction of a 50-meter swimming pool on St. Croix; and

**WHEREAS,** in 1972, he was elected the first president of the Virgin Islands Swimming Federation where he served until 1976; and

**WHEREAS,** from 1972 to 2012, Hans Lawaetz served as a member of the Virgin Islands Olympic Committee where he served as secretary general from 1976 to 1996, and as president from 1996-2012, leading delegations to numerous Summer and Winter Olympics, Pan American Games, and Central American and Caribbean Games; and

**WHEREAS,** in 1974, he was elected vice president of the Central American & Caribbean Swimming Association (CACSA), where he represented English-speaking countries until 1986; and

**WHEREAS,** from 1974 to 2022, Hans Lawaetz served as president of Annaly Farms, Inc.; and

**WHEREAS,** in 1974, he secured federal approval and funding to build a refrigerated warehouse and meat processing facility, enabling the inspection and sale of fresh Senepol beef; and

**WHEREAS,** from 1976 to 1984, Mr. Lawaetz was one of 12 members of the Fédération Internationale de Natation (FINA) World Swimming Technical Committee and officiated at two Olympic Games and two World Championships; and

**WHEREAS,** in 1977, he was named "Sportsman of the Year" and "Horseman of the Year" on St. Croix; and

**WHEREAS,** in 1977, Mr. Lawaetz became a founding member and the first chairman of the Virgin Islands Senepol Association (VISA) now known as the Senepol Cattle Breeders Association (SCBA); and

**WHEREAS,** from 1977 to 2016, Mr. Lawaetz served as an Executive Board Member of the Senepol Cattle Breeders Association where he served as its first president from 1977 to 1990 and again served as president from 2006 to 2009 and from 2015 to 2016; and

**WHEREAS,** in 1991, he assisted in transitioning the local association into the Senepol Cattle Breeders Association (SBCA); and

**WHEREAS,** from 1998 to 2015, he served as an executive committee member of the Central American and Caribbean Sports Organization; and

**WHEREAS,** from 2003 to 2015, he served as treasurer of the Central American and Caribbean Sports Organization; and

**WHEREAS,** from 2000 to 2012, Mr. Lawaetz served as a board member of the St. Croix Landmark Society where he served as president in 2012; and

**WHEREAS,** in 2012, Hans Lawaetz was named Honorary Life President of the Virgin Islands Olympic Committee; and

**WHEREAS,** from 2012 to 2018, Mr. Lawaetz served as president of the St. Croix Friends of Denmark Society; and

**WHEREAS,** from 2013 to 2016, he served as a Trustee for the Good Hope Country Day School; and

**WHEREAS,** in 2014, Mr. Lawaetz was appointed by Governor John P. de Jongh, Jr., to serve on the Virgin Islands Transfer Centennial Commission, where he was elected vice chairman in 2017; and

**WHEREAS,** in 2016, Hans Lawaetz was named Honorary Life President of the Senepol Cattle Breeders Association; and

**WHEREAS,** after Hurricane Maria in 2017, he was appointed by Governor Kenneth E. Mapp to the Hurricane & Resiliency Advisory Group; and

**WHEREAS,** on August 6, 2018, Mr. Lawaetz was inducted into the Southeast Region Conservation Hall of Fame; and

**WHEREAS,** on February 16, 2022, Mr. Lawaetz received the Distinguished Service Award at the 75th Annual National Associations of Conservation Districts (NACD), which comprises 3,000 districts in the United States and its Territories; and

**WHEREAS,** since 2022, he has served as vice president of Annaly Farms, Inc. and continues to manage his herd at Estate Upper Love and works daily at the Annaly Farms Meat Market; and

**WHEREAS,** in May 2025, Hans Lawaetz authored "Memoirs of a Crucian Cowboy", chronicling his family history, the development of the Senepol cattle breed, and his lifetime of service to the Virgin Islands community; 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 Hans Lawaetz for his lifetime of exemplary service to the Virgin Islands including his pioneering leadership in the development of the Senepol cattle breed, dedication to the advancement of sports and the Olympic movement, and enduring commitment to community and conservation.

**SECTION 2.** In recognition and appreciation of the profound impact of Hans Lawaetz' leadership as president of Annaly Farms, Inc.; president of the Virgin Islands Olympic Committee; and his numerous roles in international sports and agricultural organizations, which have brought distinction and recognition to the Virgin Islands on a global stage, the Legislature of the Virgin Islands, under 1 V.I.C § 103(b), awards the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor to Hans Lawaetz. The President of the Legislature, or the President's designee, shall present Hans Lawaetz with the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor, cast in his honor, and shall

prepare and present a perma plaque copy of this act to Hans Lawaetz at an appropriate ceremony.

**BILL SUMMARY**

This bill honors and commends Hans Lawaetz for his lifetime of exemplary service to the Virgin Islands including his pioneering leadership in the development of the Senepol cattle breed, dedication to the advancement of sports and the Olympic movement, and enduring commitment to community and conservation. This bill also awards Hans Lawaetz the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor.

**BR25-0938/March 24, 2026/Revised April 1, 2026/GC/Revised/April 10, 2026**

***..\..\..\..\AMENDS\36th Legislature\FRANCIS, JR., NOVELLE E\Amendment 36-951\Amendment No. 36-951-(REVISED) DRAFTED ON YELLOW.docx***