COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

10/22/2026-REPORTED OUT TO THE FLOOR
10/19/2026-REPORTED OUT TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY

BILL NO. 36-0350

Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

September 17, 2026

A resolution honoring and commending the Virgin Islands Conference of the 16th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church on its 106th anniversary

PROPOSED BY:	Senator Hubert L. Frederick Sponsors: Franklin D. Johnson, Marvin A. Blyden and Avery L. Lewis Co-sponsor: Ray Fonseca

WHEREAS, Reverend Reginald Grant Barrow, a black Anglican priest with Barbadian roots from the Episcopal Church was sent from the mainland to head the Holy Cross Anglican Church in St. Croix in 1918;

WHEREAS shortly after Reverend Barrow's arrival he discovered the poor conditions under which a majority of the locals of St. Croix labored and gave his full support to the labor union movement of St. Croix;

WHEREAS, Reverend Barrow became the Educational Minister for the St. Croix Labor Union and together with Mr. David Hamilton Jackson, the Founder & President of the St. Croix Labor Union, waged a social justice battle for higher wages and better working conditions for the poor who labored on the plantations of St. Croix;

WHEREAS, the battle was so effectively waged that the white plantation owners and Danish government officials complained of Reverend Barrow's activities to his Bishop, which ultimately resulted in his being excommunicated from the Episcopal Church;

WHEREAS, Reverend Barrow told his parishioners at Holy Cross Anglican Church of his refusal to cease advocating for the poor and how it resulted in his dismissal by the Anglican Church and 800 members of the Holy Cross Anglican Church marched out in protest and worshipped God under the branches of a tamarind tree in Estate Grove Place;

WHEREAS, the St. Croix Labor Union gave the pastor and his parishioners permission to use the Great House to hold their meetings and David Hamilton Jackson connected Reverend Barrow with Bishop Monroe Davis, of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and advised Reverend Barrow and his parishioners to seek affiliation with the African Methodist Episcopal Church;

WHEREAS, in 1920, after the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Bishop William Alfred Fountain and Dr. R.C. Holbrook of Arkansas traveled to St. Croix and took the members and Pastor Barrow into the African Methodist Episcopal Church;

WHEREAS, the St. Croix Labor Union gave the new church, named St. Luke A.M.E. Church, nearly three acres of choice land, upon which to build a church and a parsonage;

WHEREAS, the St. Luke A.M.E. Church 106 years later, is still situated adjacent to that tamarind tree on historical property in Estate Grove Place, and is a vibrant growing church presently under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Jermaine Mulley, a native of St. Croix;

WHEREAS, in 1920, since many of the plantation owners were unwilling to pay 60 cents per day for laborers and a dollar a day for tradesmen, the Virgin Islands Conference expanded its presence in St. Croix to meet the spiritual needs of locals from the country districts of St. Croix who sought employment in Christiansted by commissioning the planting of a new church, Bethel A.M.E. Church, founded by Rev. Reginald Barrow and Rev. August Bough;

WHEREAS, Bethel A.M.E. Church 106 years later, is still situated on the same historic lot in the town of Christiansted, and is now led by Presiding Elder Uklyn Hendricks, a native of Jamaica;

WHEREAS, the Virgin Islands Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church invested in expanding its presence in the territory by organizing Grant A.M.E. Church of St. Thomas in 1888, under the pastorate of Reverend Taylor, but the church folded after his death, and its members joined Wesley Methodist Church in St. Thomas;

WHEREAS, in 2016 the Virgin Islands Conference, under the leadership of Bishop John White, during the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, heeded the advice of the Rev. Carlos Perkins, then pastor of St. Luke A.M.E. Church, and Bishop White commissioned the planting of a new church in St. Thomas;

WHEREAS, in 2017, at the 97th annual conference of the Virgin Islands Conference of the 16th Episcopal District under the leadership of Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield, Family of Faith African Methodist Episcopal Church was planted on the island of St. Thomas, and officially recognized as a new church mission within the Virgin Islands Conference, and Rev. Charles Lee Brown Jr., a Thomian resident from Baltimore, Maryland was appointed as its Founding Pastor.

WHEREAS, this Legislature seeks to cherish the rich history of our territory and has celebrated the impact of the numerous leaders from the Virgin Islands Conference of the 16th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church who through its three churches have and continue to build a mighty legacy of fighting for the economic, social, and spiritual empowerment of the least, the lost, the little, the unlucky and the left out so that God's justice for all made be realized in the Virgin Islands, Now. Therefore

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:

SECTION 1. The Legislature of the Virgin Islands, on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands, recognizes, honors, and commends the Virgin Islands Conference of the 16th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church on its 106th anniversary.

SECTION 2. The President of the Legislature or the President's designee shall prepare and present a perma plaque copy of this resolution to the Bishop of the 16th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

BILL SUMMARY

This resolution honors and commends the Virgin Islands Conference of the 16th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church on its 106th anniversary.

BR26-1086/August 26, 2026/LMW