

LEGISLATURE OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS



35th Legislature, THE HONORABLE SENATOR DIANE T. CAPEHART

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Chair

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Committee on Rules & Judiciary

Committee on Disaster Recovery & Infrastructure
Committees on Health, Hospitals and Human Services
Committee on Education and Workforce Development
Committee on Economic Development & Agriculture
Subcommittee on Health and Public Safety

March 14, 2024

The 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands' Committee on Rules and Judiciary met in the Frits E. Lawaetz Conference Room on March 14, 2024. Lawmakers considered nominations, leases, and bills. The approved items on today's agenda were forwarded to the full body. The following nominations were approved:

- Dr. Nathaniel Olive as the Land Occupier Nominee for the Virgin Islands Conservation District - District of St. Croix.
- Carlos Robles as the Land Occupier Nominee for the Virgin Islands Conservation District - District of St. Thomas.

Also on the agenda were the following leases:

- Bill No. 35-0077 - An Act approving the lease agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands, acting through its Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement and St. Thomas Rescue, Inc., Parcel No. 146 Revised Submarine Base No. 6, Southwest Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, consisting of a one-story building, on approximately 0.1899 U.S. acres of improved land more-or-less, zoned P, for the purpose of operating a long-term headquarters for all rescue related activities of the Lessee, and for other related purposes. The measure was sponsored by Senator Nouvelle E. Francis, Jr.
- Bill No. 35-0211 - An Act approving the Lease Agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands, acting through its Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement, and James O. Gaston for Plot No. 9-G VICORP Lands, Prince

Quarter, St. Croix, Virgin Islands, consisting of approximately 653, 400 U.S. sq. ft. or 15 U.S. acres of unimproved land, more or less, as shown on Drawing No. A9-5-C008 to be used for crop production and rearing small livestock. The measure was sponsored by Senator Novelle E. Francis., by request of the Governor.

- Bill No. 35-0225 - An Act approving the multi-year lease agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands, acting through its Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement, and Virgin Islands Centre for Architecture, Crafts, and Build Heritage, St. Croix, Inc. d/b/a Virgin Islands Architecture Center for Built Heritage and Crafts, for Plot No. 8 Church Street and Plots No. 21, 22, and 23 Hospital Street, Christiansted Town, Company Quarter, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, consisting of two, two-story masonry buildings to be used for the common good, welfare, and education of the people of the Virgin Islands on heritage and cultural legacy, and for other related purposes. The measure was sponsored by Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr., by Request of the Governor.

All of the leases were approved in support of the expansion of emergency services, crop production and cultural education.

The following bills were approved:

- Bill No. 35-0133 - An Act amending title 17 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 15, relating to scholarships by adding section 190gg to establish an educational scholarship program to support individuals interested in pursuing a career in the maritime industry in the Virgin Islands. The measure was sponsored by Senators Angel L. Bolques, Jr., Samuel Carrion, Donna A. Frett-Gregory and Dwayne M. DeGraff, and cosponsored by Senator Ray Fonseca.
- Bill No. 35-0172 - An Act amending Title 29, chapter 5 Virgin Islands Code, relating to building codes to provide for adoption of nationally recognized consensus-based codes and standards and amendments to such codes that are in the best interests of the territory, and to provide for clarifications to the Virgin Islands building code. The

measure was sponsored by Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory, Alma Francis-Heyliger, and Cosponsor: Novelle E. Francis, Jr.

- Bill No. 35-0182 - An Act amending Title 14 of the Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 51 by designating the existing provisions as subchapter I and adding a subchapter II relating to the nonconsensual dissemination of sexually explicit images. The measure was sponsored by Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory, Alma Francis-Heyliger, Kenneth L. Gittens and Cosponsor: Novelle E. Francis, Jr.
- Bill No. 35-0218 – An Act amending Title 24 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 12 relating to unemployment benefits by: reducing the number of weeks that unemployment benefits can be received; increasing the statute of limitations for the collection of overpayments of unemployment benefits from claimants and for delinquent employer contribution; allowing for the implementation of the payroll variation methodology launch in the calendar year beginning January 2024; implementing a 10-year record retention period for employers; and requiring employers to register with the Virgin Islands State Information Data Exchange System. The measure was sponsored by Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr. by request of the Governor

Senators present at the Committee meeting included: Diane T. Capehart, Milton E. Potter, Angel L. Bolques, Jr., Kenneth L. Gittens, Franklin D. Johnson, Marise James, Carla J. Joseph, and Non-committee member Novelle E. Francis, Jr.