

LAWMAKERS APPROVE NOMINATIONS FOR THE V.I. BOARD OF LICENSURE AND THE V.I. BOARD OF LICENSED COUNSELORS AND EXAMINERS

Date : August 12, 2019

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THOMAS- Members of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary chaired by Sen. Janelle Sarauw, convened in a meeting at the Capitol Building on Thursday, and voted favorably for the nominations of Janette Bowers, RN, MSN, FNP, BC to serve as a Licensed Practical Nurse for the Virgin Islands Board of Licensure (VIBNL), Tamara Mohammed, MS, MCH, LPC to serve as a Licensed Professional Counselor for the V.I. Board of Licensed Counselors and Examiners, Ophelia Powell-Torres, RN, BSN, MA. to serve as Nurse Educator on the V.I. Board of Nurse Licensure, and Patricia Towal, M.Ed. LPC, to serve as a Licensed Professional Counselor on the Board of Licensed Counselors and Examiners.

The

nominations were sent to the Legislature by Governor Albert Bryan; set forth from Section (16) of the Revised Organic Act of 1954, and Title 3, Section 65a of the Virgin Islands Code. All items approved will be forwarded to the Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

Nominee

Bowers noted that she earned a Doctorate Degree in Nursing. She was also awarded the Nurse Leadership Award for the Doctoral Practice from Frontier University. Her clinical practice in the Territory was at the Frederiksted Health Care. Nominee Bowers mentioned that her work was geared towards providing medical care to people who are homeless, patients living with HIV, and the low-income families. She stated that because of her work history she is qualified to serve on VIBNL. "I have had the privilege of gaining a variety of experiences and have developed expertise in several areas including family medicine, HIV medicine, homeless health, emergency medicine, and cardiovascular medicine," said Bowers.

According

to Nominee Mohammed, she gained valuable experience working as a Substance Abuse Counselor at a community-based treatment center providing support to at-risk youths who suffered from substance abuse and are in juvenile detention facilities. Additionally, Mohammed mentioned that she previously worked as a Military & Family Life Counselor providing services to military families in need of care; establish practices to provide in-person and telehealth counseling services to clients with challenges, and completed crisis intake assessments for an Inpatient Psychiatric Facility. Nominee Mohammad said, "There is a great need for the care in the Virgin Islands, as well as a lack of resources to seek help when needed. Improving mental health care is a matter of health equity and human rights, and the establishment of the board is a solid step in the right direction."

Separately,

Nominee Torres stated that some of her goals to improve VIBL are to establish a medication course for CNA's to become certified, providing a list of nursing assistant skills for nursing students who are taking the certification exam, transparency, and accepting nurses and nurse aides trained in the VI by various states in the United States. Similarly, Nominee Towal noted that because of additional Licensed Counselors there will be an increase of counseling services in the Territory. Therefore, there will be a rise in revenues and the availability of counseling services will be a lot more accessible to patrons.

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