

## NOMINATIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE GOVERNOR MOVES FORWARD

**Date :** March 15, 2018

St. John – The Committee on Rules and Judiciary, chaired by Sen. Novelle Francis, held a meeting at the Cleone Creque Legislative Conference Room on Thursday, and voted to approve three nominations sent to the Legislature by Governor Kenneth E. Mapp; set forth from Section (16) of the Revised Organic Act of 1954, and Title 3, Section 65a of the Virgin Islands Code.

“In recognizing Women History Month, I am honored to have this committee meeting here. Cleone Creque was a fierce advocate for women and worked on several legislations to enhance their lives,” said Sen. Francis. “I also want to thank all of the nominees for their desire to serve on their prospective boards.

Nominee Julio Rhymer to serve as Director for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). “My core strengths are expertise in financial reporting, proficiency in budget planning review, forecasting surpluses and shortfalls for the fiscal year,” said Nominee Rhymer. His goals are to complete and submit the FY 2019 budget and to alleviate the structural deficit of the Territory.

“There are sexual harassment claims that clouds your nomination,” said Sen. Francis. In a line of questioning, Sen. Francis inquired about a sexual harassment investigation, concerns about the claims and if Rhymer is affected by it in the current position at OMB. In response, Rhymer stated that there was never an investigation, he has no concerns and it does not interfere with his work as Director of OMB.

Nominee Dina Perry-Malone to serve as a member of the Virgin Islands Housing Authority (VIHA) Board of Commissioners for the District of St. Thomas-St. John. “I will utilize my business acumen to develop and execute initiatives for the residents at VIHA,” she said. Some of her goals include improving home-ownership opportunities for residents, support literacy programs and to expand community-based programs.

“How do we accommodate residents of VIHA in becoming homeowners?” asked Sen. Positive Nelson. Nominee Malone stated that there are the Federal Housing Administration Loan provides 96.5% financing for first-time home buyers. Additionally, the VA Home Loan is another option.”

Nominee John Quelch to serve as a member of the University of the Virgin Islands Board of Trustees for the District of St. Croix. “As a provost, I oversee executive education, lifelong and online learning initiatives across the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI).” His goals are to assist UVI in preparing graduates for their careers, further the economic impact of the Research and Technology Park on St. Croix, and to seek additional external research grants for UVI.

Sen. Francis asked, "Considering that you live in Miami and the U.S. Virgin Islands part-time, will you have the time to attend Board meetings?" Nominee Quelch stated that the Board has scheduled meetings three times a year and he will attend all of them. If there is an emergency meeting, then he can participate via teleconference.

After much consideration, lawmakers voted favorably for all the nominees. Afterwards, senators received testimony and voted to hold in committee, Bill No. 32-0030- An Act amending Title 33 of the Virgin Islands Code, Section 2404 limiting increases in the assessed value of real property. Dolace McLean, General Counsel for the Office of the Lieutenant Governor stated that the measure is a fair property assessment for all the islands in the Territory.

"The amended circuit breaker and the federal real estate impact credit recognize the special circumstances that obtain on each island, and target the need to individualize the income capacity of a particular taxpayer, or taxpaying household," said McLean. "Additionally, Bill No. 32-0030 offers property tax relief aimed directly at taxpayers experiencing hardship based on income and has a lower revenue impact on the overall property tax base. This is a critical factor considering the current fiscal crisis faced by the government."

Similarly, Sen. Janette Millin Young, Sponsor of the Bill said, "The measure allows residents to keep their properties while allowing a fair evaluation of their real property."

However, Myrtle Berry, St. John Resident stated that the proper way to address this issue is to correct the mass appraisal system of all properties in the Territory.

Separately, senators voted to hold in committee: Bill No. 32-0130-An Act amending the Virgin Islands Code, Title 14 adding Chapter 123 to enact "The Virgin Islands Criminal Street Gang Prevention Act" and Title 33, Chapter 111, adding section 3100w establishing the "Crime and Gang Prevention Fund."

All nominations and bills approved will be forwarded to the Full Body for further consideration. Senators present are Novelle Francis, Positive Nelson, Dwayne DeGraff, Sammuel Sanes, Kurt Violet, Tregenza Roach, and Janette Millin Young. **Access photos:**  
**<http://www.legvi.org/committeemeetings/Media/>**

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