

NOMINATIONS, RESOLUTIONS, AND BILLS MOVES FORWARD

Date : September 17, 2019

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THOMAS- Members of the 33rd Legislature, led by Senate President Novelle E. Francis, Jr., convened in Legislative Session at the Capitol Building on Monday and voted favorably for nominations, resolutions, and bills. All approved items by the full body will be forwarded to the Governor for further consideration.

In the first block, lawmakers voted favorably for all the nominations on the agenda. The nominees are Christopher Finch to become a Member of the Virgin Islands Government Hospitals and Health Facilities Corporation, Dr. Brian Bacot to become a Member of the Board of Medical Examiners- St. Thomas/St. John District, and Rupert Ross as the Director for the Bureau of Information Technology. 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.

However, the nomination of Trevor Velinor as Commissioner for the Virgin Islands Police Department was removed from the agenda due to his absence. In a written letter sent to the Legislature of the Virgin Islands, Velinor stated that he was currently off-island due to medical reasons. However, senators wanted an opportunity to further vet the nominee as it pertains to Velinor's strategies and plans in handling recent criminal activities plaguing the Virgin Islands. "There needed to be further discussions in regards with his plans to address crimes in the Territory," said Senate President Francis.

Furthermore, senators voted and approved resolutions honoring and recognizing outstanding Virgin Islanders for their contributions to the community. Firstly, Bill No. 33-0020 – A Resolution honoring and

commending Tishelle Knight for her accomplishments, service and musical contributions to the Virgin Islands. Secondly, Bill No. 33-0060 – A Resolution posthumously honoring and commending Alvin “Ali” Paul for his contribution to the culture of the Virgin Islands, through the Mocko Jumbie Artform. Lastly, Bill No. 33-0082 – An Act honoring and commending Robert O’Connor, Jr. for his commitment to the people of the Virgin Islands through his service as a Senator, his membership on the Port Authority Board and his work as a community leader by naming the new Port Authority maintenance building in his honor.

In the second and third blocks, policymakers tackled several bills. Some of the measures pertained to loitering laws, first aid signage in restaurants, the appointment and expiration of Legislative Youth Advisory Council, and the powers of the Economic Development Commission. Additionally, lawmakers also considered and voted on measures regarding mandating businesses to offer two payment options to their customers, requiring all passengers to wear seat belts, applying technical amendments to the Economic Recovery Fee, and establishing a definition of horses for the purpose of horse racing.

Policymakers voted and approved the following:

- Bill No. 33-0011 – An Act amending Title 14 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 60, section 1191 relating to strengthening the loitering law and increasing the penalty for loitering.
- Bill No. 33-0092 – An Act amending Title 4, chapter 1 of the Virgin Islands Code by adding a new section 7 to provide for the continuing operation of the Judicial Branch of the Virgin Islands in the event of natural disaster or other emergencies.
- Bill No. 33-0061 – An Act amending Title 29, chapter 12, section 705 of the Virgin Islands Code relating to the powers of the Economic Development Commission (“EDC”), sections 713a and 713b relating to tax reduction benefits for EDC beneficiaries, and title 29, chapter 23, section 1308 relating to the Hotel Development Trust Fund.

- Bill No. 33-0080 – An Act amending Title 2, chapter 9, section 154, subsection (b) of the Virgin Islands Code regarding the expiration of the appointment of members to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council.
- Bill No. 33-0085 – An Act amending Title 2, chapter 9, section 154, subsection (a) of the Virgin Islands Code by increasing the number of days for the appointment of members to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council.
- Bill No. 33-0098 – an Act amending title 12A of the Virgin Islands Code by adding a new chapter 8 requiring that businesses offer at least two payment options to their customers, and matters related there.
- Bill No. 33-0104 – An Act amending the Hotel Development Act, title 29, chapter 23, of the Virgin Islands Code by making technical amendments to sections 1302 through 1309 and inserting new sections 1312,1313,1314, and 1317, regarding the Economic Recovery Fee and matters related thereto.
- Bill No. 33-0156-An Act to rezone Plot No. 25 Estate Concordia, West End Quarter, Frederiksted, St. Croix, from R-2(Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family) to B-3 (Business-Scattered) to allow for restaurant and retail uses on the property
- Bill No. 33-0154 – An Act approval of the Governor of the Virgin Islands of Major Coastal Zone Permit Co. CZX-18—18(L&W).
- Bill No. 33-0086 – An Act amending Title 19 of the Virgin Islands Code by inserting a new chapter 52 requiring all restaurants and establishments that sell food to post signs that demonstrate appropriate first aid for choking.
- Bill No. 33-0040 – An Act amending title 20. Part II, chapter 41, section 466, subsection (b) of the Virgin Islands Code to require each passenger in the rear seat of a vehicle to wear a safety belt.

However, senators voted down Bill No. 33-0142- An Act to rezone Plot Nos.11, Remainder Northern Portion, and Remainder Southern Portion, Estate Longford, Company Quarter, St. Croix, from A-1 (Agriculture Zone) to A-2 (Agriculture Zone) to allow for the plots to be subdivided into two-acre parcels.

Separately, senators voted to remove from the agenda:

Bill No. 33-0036 – An Act amending Title 7, chapter 1, subchapter 1, section 2 of the Virgin Islands Code by including horses in the definition of livestock; and amending title 32, chapter 11, section 203 of the Virgin Islands Code by establishing a definition of “horses” for the purpose of horse racing.

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