

RULES AND JUDICIARY COMMITTEE GIVES THUMBS UP ON HEALTH BILLS

Date : June 13, 2018

ST. CROIX- The Committee on Rules and Judiciary chaired by Senator Novelle Francis, Jr., held a hearing on Wednesday in the Virgin Islands Cardiac Center at the Juan F. Luis Hospital, St. Croix to vote on three pieces of proposed legislation sponsored by Senator Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly.

The measures were Bill No. 32-0197 an Act amending the Virgin Islands Code providing a minimum standard of care for sheltered animals; Bill No. 32-0177, relating to renewal of nursing licenses; and Bill No. 32-0212, to allow for the pronouncement of death by registered nurses, physician assistants and nurse practitioners.

As it relates to Bill No. 32-00212 which allow for registered nurses, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants to announce when hospice patients, committee members pointed out that existing laws law requires that such pronouncement must be done by a physician or corner, depending on the island district.

The Bill was amended to incorporate a suggestion by Attorney General Claude Walker at a public hearing on May 30th to require that the attending physician for hospice center selects the registered nurse, nurse practitioner or physician assistant who would be authorized to pronounce the death of a hospice patient.

Bill No. 32-0197 seeks to provide a minimum standard of care for sheltered animals was amended and now would give the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture (DOA) authority to regulate animal shelters, pet shops, pet groomers and breeders to ensure they meet the minimum standards of care.

The amendment also clarified the Bill's intent and reduced the requirement for DOA to conduct two inspections per year, as well as to allow for a warning to be issued prior to fines of \$250.00 for a first infraction of the new law and \$500.00 for a second within the same year.

Bill No. 32-0177, relating to the renewal of nursing licenses, which are required every two years, was amended to allow the board to renew licenses for nurses at different times throughout the year based on their birthdates which would ease the burden of the Board to make the renewal process quicker and more efficient.

All three Bills were voted on and given favorable recommendations to the Full Body for further consideration.

Committee members at the Rules and Judiciary hearing on Wednesday were: Chairman Senator Novelle Francis Jr., Jean Forde, Myron Jackson, Sammuell Sanes, and Janette Millin Young. Non-Committee members were: Senators Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly, Brian Smith, Marvin Blyden, Kurt Violet, Dwayne DeGraff, and Janelle Sarauw.

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