April 8, 2021

Re: Modified TESTIMONY FOR BILL No. 34-0019

Dear Senators and V.I. public

The saying “it takes a village to raise a child” applies to my daughter Ronaqua Russell. Ronaqua’s village included like minds, like values and deep spiritual faith. Ronaqua’s accomplishments, although individual, is a reflection of that village. It included Arthur Chinnery and his entire family, Annette Chinnery her entire family, Aquannette Chinnery and her friends and acquaintances over the years, her great grandmother Eulalie C. R. Rivera’s vast array of family and community.

As a parent, by design, you have to get to know your children – you study their habits, you relish all of their qualities – the good and not so good - their character is shaped by interaction with parents and family – as they grow you appreciate who they are. As they grow, you try to understand what they see, think and believe.

Ronaqua has always been, and I’m sure she will always remain, a passionate lifelong learner. She is an adventurous traveler, with a passion for life, and devotion to the church and family. She is a responsible and kind person who enjoys singing, and of course, flying.

While she was in junior high school and high school I really discovered that she was a very friendly person. She began to demonstrate real generosity and consideration for teachers classmates and her friends. Attending school activities at Eudora Kean high school to see her perform was always a joy for me.
Before attending the Coast Guard Academy she suffered a sport injury that sidelined her for a while. Her dream of becoming a pilot could have been crushed. However, her courage, perseverance and complete dedication to heal herself prevailed. I spent two weeks with her in New Mexico while she was recovering. It is then I gained a full understanding of my daughter

How would I describe Ronaqua and identity who she is:

She is authentic: what you see is what you get. She is fair and honest in all of her dealings with people.

She has a resilient spirit and demonstrates the freedom and independence that a woman in today’s world needs to be successful.

She understands her history: she is connected to her past and looks forward to her bright future in this very complicated world.

Last, we must address her involvement with the United States Coast Guard. The Coast Guard is a military multi-mission, maritime force offering a unique blend of military, law enforcement, humanitarian, regulatory, and diplomatic capabilities.

Ronaqua is a shining example of the core values of the United States Coast Guard which are honor, respect and devotion to duty.

She has made us very proud and we continue to support everything she has done and everything she plans to do in the future.

Take care and God Bless.
Cordially,

/s/ Ronald E. Russell
Ronald E. Russell, Esq.