



February 12, 2024

Honorable Senator Kenneth L. Gittens
Chairperson of the Homeland Security, Justice & Public Safety,
Committee of the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

Honorable Senator Kenneth L. Gittens
Chairperson of the Homeland Security, Justice & Public Safety,
Honorable Senator Ray Fonseca, Vice Chair

Honorable members Senator Angel L. Bolques, Jr, Senator Dwayne DeGraff, Senator Alma Francis Heyliger, Senator Javan E. James, Sr., and Senator Franklin D. Johnson

Good morning,

My name is Dr. Clema S. Lewis, DHL. I am the Executive Director of the Women's Coalition of St. Croix. I have been working with victims/survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence for 40 years in this community.

First, I would like to thank the Honorable Senator Kenneth L. Gittens for inviting me to testify before the legislature today. I would also like to thank the Honorable Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory for proposing this Bill #35-0182. An Act amending Title 14 of the Virgin Islands Code Chapter 51 by designating the existing provisions as

It is also known as Nonconsensual Pornography or Revenge Pornography.

The WCSC has been providing services to all crime victims since our inception in 1981. Here are some of the services we provide.

- Individual and family counseling
- Crisis Intervention 24/7/365
- Advocacy and support to victim/survivors of all crimes
- We conduct support groups for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- In person court accompany, advocacy and support.
- We provide food, clothing, and shelter to victims of DV and sexual assault.

The Women's Coalition of St. Croix wholeheartedly support Bill# 35-0182.

What is nonconsensual /revenge porn?

This is when someone steals or shares and disseminates sexually explicit images without the victim's consent, specifically to publicly humiliate the victim or use the information for financial gain. This Bill will give victims an opportunity to seek justice when they have been violated publicly based on the dissemination of sexually explicit images.

Please note, most of the victims who have been impacted by this horrible act have been in intimate relationships with the perpetrators that are disseminating their personal images. We have seen this act carried out using cellphones, videos, the internet, text messages, fax machines, cameras and still pictures. Additionally, we know that this has been carried out in middle schools, high schools, universities, public places, government agencies, private

business, private business clubs, chat rooms, houses of worship, etc.

The impact on the victim is devastating! It can range from shame, embarrassment, humiliation, loss of employment, loss of trust, family breakdown, loss of control of life as they knew it prior to the offense.

In all cases the victims trusted the perpetrators! The aftereffects are like sexual assault victims, anxiety, depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Many of the victims are women and are too ashamed to report the incident because of the embarrassment and stigma in this community. Based on the identity of the perpetrator, the victims are afraid no one will believe them. This will have significant consequences on the victims, personal, physical, and mental health, and well-being. This is considered a gender-based crime, because most of the victims targeted by this crime are women.


In summary, we are so appreciative that this bill is coming before the Senate. It is long overdue. If we do not protect our most vulnerable citizens, then who will? Any woman in our community can be the next victim.

I would like to make a few recommendations to the Bill.

1. Page 4.1035. Punishment.
 - b. A person who is convicted to two or more violation should be placed on the National Sex Offender Registry.
2. Page 5. 1037. Forfeiture
 1. After an opportunity to be heard by the court, a person who has been found guilty of committing the offense of non-consensual dissemination of private sexual material /images

forfeits should go to a victim's fund that will be set up to assist victims of this crime with whatever losses they incurred because of this victimization. This special victim fund will be administered by the victims advocate groups in the Virgin Islands.

Thank you for your time and attention.


Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Clema S. Lewis, DHL
Executive Director
Women's Coalition of St. Croix