



Raymond J. Williams, Executive Director
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Good afternoon Senator Kenneth Gittens, Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, other members of the committee and non committee members present. My name is Shalyn Proctor, Deputy Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Lottery. I am here to present this testimony on behalf of Executive Director, Raymond J. Williams. Executive Director Williams is currently out of the territory on business. Along with me appearing this afternoon is Ja'Keema Richards, Director of Security & Investigations, who will answer questions to the best of her ability related to the matters presented in your letter dated February 23, 2024.

We require all our officers to be POST certified as a condition of employment. The following is a chronology of our Enforcement division:

Director Ja'Keema Richards (territorial) started on June 26, 2023

Enforcement Officer Federico Perez (STT) resigned on January 29, 2024

Enforcement Officer Bernard Moise (STT) retired on November 30, 2023

Enforcement Officer Santiago Garcia III (STX) resigned September 29, 2023

Enforcement Officer Syeda Rodriquez (STX) completed her POST certification, October 2022

Enforcement Officer Stacy Sewer (STT) started on October 2, 2023

Enforcement Officer Abraham Connors (STT) started December 27, 2023

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We are presently recruiting for the position of Chief Of Enforcement (STX), and two additional Enforcement Officers, one in each district. Our Human Resources Director along with our Director of Security & Investigations continue to expand our efforts to fill these vacancies. However, due to a shortage in human resources territorially, filling open positions continues to present challenges. The VIL offers salaries that are generally more competitive than that of other government agencies along with either similar or better benefits, but even so makes it difficult to recruit personnel. We have been actively pursuing a more vigorous and targeted approach to include outreach to other law enforcement agencies, and postings on the VIL website along with radio and newspapers ads. Your request for certain specific information may potentially lead to disclosure of ongoing initiatives that require confidentiality. We do not want to alert or provide the targeted public with information that can put our enforcement team at personal safety risk. I hope you and the committee understand this.

Back in December 2023 we appeared before your committee to present testimony on Bill number 35-0179, a series of amendments to Title 14, chapter 61 of the Virgin Islands Code relating to gaming violations, and Title 32, chapter 13, governing the V. I. Lottery. The presentation of these amendments came after careful review amongst legal scholars inside and outside our community, law enforcement, community leaders, and the public. This measure was held in committee for further revision. Senators, I emphatically want to place on the record here today that contrary to what some may believe, the work that is required



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to stem the illegal activity in the gaming industry cannot happen without stronger and more aggressive penalties. We have been working with Senators Capehart and Bolques, along with our legal counsel and the office of the Attorney General to come up with the compromises suggested. We remain committed to making the differences in the gaming industry that continue to take millions of dollars out of the territory that would otherwise enhance lives in our community. I must state that for the better part of my six year tenure, I have been attempting to move the needle on these and other code clarifications that would give us the legal ability to take initiatives to enforce against all the illegal games that are prevalent throughout our community. We are preparing to resubmit these measures shortly for further consideration by this Committee.

Notwithstanding the code amendments, we continue to perform surveillance and other initiatives that will eventually result in legal action against the perpetrators of these illegal games. We mirror POST training and certification guidelines as part of our overall policy. Our regulatory approach to licensing retailers of Video Lottery Terminals (VLT's) include but are not limited to owner/operator background investigations, business licensure requirements similar to the Department of Licensing & Consumer Affairs, retailer establishments (venue) safety and health requirements, ingress and egress locations, fire safety, and the number of VLT machines that their floor plan can safely hold to name a few.



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Thank you for allowing us to place our testimony on the record. We stand ready to answer questions that may come up.

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