

Pedro Cruz
Testifier on Bill 35-0229
Honoring Gov. Kenneth Ezra Mapp
July 18, 2024

Good morning Honorable Senator Diane Capehart, Chairwoman of the Committee of Rules and Judiciary, Senators, listening and viewing audience, good morning. I am Pedro Cruz, and I am delighted to be here this morning, at this special historic occasion, to testify on behalf of former Governor Kenneth E. Mapp.

I had the privilege to know Mapp while attending St. Croix Central high School; and from since then, I have admired him as a respectable individual. Due to this fact, I supported him the first time he was postulated for a senate seat in 1982; and from, thereafter, I have always supported him through his political career. His remarkable performance highly distinguished him as a passionate leader, who served with dignity for the improvement of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

I am indeed honored to be part of this unique occasion that marks a precedent legacy for future generations. It is with this sentiment, that I congratulate and commend the 35th Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands, and in particular Senator Franklin D. Johnson, Donna A. Frett-Gregory, Milton E. Potter, Samuel Carrión and Javan E. James, Sr. for proposing Bill 35-0229, to recognize and honor Former Governor Kenneth Ezra Mapp, one of the most outstanding Governor in the history of the United States Virgin Islands. After viewing the proposed bill, I was very amazed to learn of the many achievements Mr. Mapp accomplished during his 40 plus years of service to the U.S. Virgin Islands. His consistency and persistence in his endeavor made him a unique person.

His dedication thru his life as: a Son, Friend, Student, Police, Senator, Businessman, and last but not least as Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, has developed a legacy of a true “patriota”. A patriot that truly cares and loves the U.S. Virgin Islands and its people. As a public servant, he has shown with action his serious commitment by going the extra mile to solve extraordinary matters affecting the entire Virgin Islands. I have been impacted tremendously, like many others, to have seen how former Governor Mapp handled the aftermath devastations caused by hurricanes Irma and Maria.

It was during this rough time that he demonstrated, not with words but with action, his care and love for the Virgin Islands and its people. It wouldn't matter how busy was the day for him; he was responding and reporting every single evening the updated rehabilitation's process and progress of the four islands, of the United States Virgin Islands.

In occasions we saw him exhausted; but, his profound compassion for the Virgin Islands and its people was the motive that kept him on going. No one knows the huge sacrifices he made as a human being to assure the safety, security and continuance services in the territory.

¡Governor Mapp, thank you, thank you, thank you!

I had the privilege to be part of the latter years of his service in government and to become more acquainted with his sentiments, commitment, leadership and devoted dedication. This is why I say without reservation and with absolute certainty that Former Governor Kenneth E. Mapp was, by far, one of the most outstanding Governor. Definitely, he has excelled with excellency his duty as Governor of the United States Virgin Islands.

Furthermore, I personally experienced occasions when Former Governor Mapp demonstrated the deepest vibrant passion for the children and people of the United States Virgin Islands. It was during my tenure as Commissioner of DSPR, that I had the experience of a close working relationship with Former Governor Kenneth Mapp. Therefore, I can truly say that Former Governor Mapp was very alert with the children after school and sports programs.

For the first time in the history of our government, we had over 450 inter-islands children and youths between the ages of 11 to 18 competing in ten different sports for three consecutive years. And it was also the first time in our government history that St. John was being represented by teams of their own children.

One of the most impacted moments was when Former Governor Mapp invited me to his office. I was astonished to learn that he had assigned One million dollars from the Sport Tourism Budget for local sports affairs (500,000 for Dept. of Education and 500,000 for DSPR) to be spent territory-wide on our children and youths' sports program.

It was because of his initiative that children and youths enjoyed inter-islands sports competition and experienced the different islands unique beauty and nature. With the many praises and appreciations expressed by sports fans and citizens, particularly the parents and their children, I must acknowledge that without Former Governor Mapp involvement, this would have not happened.

I strongly believe that this is an appropriate occasion to express on behalf of the parents, children, youths and all the participants the most-sincere gratitude to former Governor Mapp for his enthusiastic support.

I must say, that his dedication and service to the Virgin Islands and its people, has established a legacy in the history of the U.S. Virgin Islands that will be mentioned from generation through generations.

To conclude, I must again commend the 35th Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands for recognizing and honoring Former Governor Kenneth Ezra Mapp for his incomparable productive service of 40-plus years, he humbly dedicated to the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Therefore, I too, like many others who agree with me, proudly say: Governor Mapp, this honor is well deserved, you are a true Hero; thank you, thank you very much for your outstanding dedicated excellent service.

On behalf of the United States Virgin Islands, its people, family, friends and supporters, I extend the most undivided appreciation to you.

Again, thank you for your 40 plus years of service. We love you and you will always be in our hearts and memory. God bless you now and always!!!