



**THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS**  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
**Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802**  
**340-774-0001**

May 29, 2019

VIA MESSENGER

The Honorable Novelle E. Francis, Jr.  
President  
Thirty-Third Legislature of the Virgin Islands  
Capitol Building  
St. Thomas, VI 00802

**Re: Governor's Action on Bill Nos. 33-0047, 33-0048, 33-0049, 33-0066, 33-0073, 33-0006, 33-0014, 33-0032, 33-0067, 33-0070, and Resolution Nos. 1850, 1851, 1852.**

Dear Mr. President:

I write to advise you that, pursuant to Section 9(d) of the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands of 1954, as amended, I have today acted on Bills numbered 33-0047, 33-0048, 33-0049, 33-0066, 33-0073, 33-0006, 33-0014, 33-0032, 33-0067, 33-0070, and Resolution Nos. 1850, 1851, and 1852.

Beginning with the four Bills approving leases of government property to our local businesses and farmers, I am pleased to approve the following: Bill No. 33-0047 to Violet Drew and Samuel Tyson for Plot No. 4-G VICORP Land, Prince Quarter, St. Croix, and Bill No. 33-0049 to Rueben Liburd and Sylvia Liburd for Plot No. 4-LA VICORP Land, Prince Quarter, St. Croix, for the production of fruits, vegetables, and culinary herbs; Bill No. 33-0048 to Dave Jeffers, d/b/a Paradise Trucking Service, for Parcel No. 99 B-3 Submarine Base, No. 6 Southside Quarter, St. Thomas, for the operation of a trucking and delivery service business; and Bill No. 33-0066 to Victor's New Hideout, LLC for Parcel No. 179 Submarine Base, No. 6 Southside Quarter, St. Thomas, for the improvement and operation of the Victor's New Hideout restaurant and nightclub. I would like to note that there is a typographical error in Bill No. 33-0066. Although not detrimental to its approval, the Bill, as written and approved, states that the referenced map to the Lease is OLG No. D9-5677-T94; but the Lease references Map No. D9-5675-T94. Overall, I look forward to the improvements to and active uses of these properties which will contribute to the

economy of the Virgin Islands.

I am also pleased to sign into law Bill No. 33-0073, An Act amending Official Zoning Map. No. SJZ-7 for the island of St. John for Parcel No. 285 Estate Contant & Enighed, Cruz Bay Quarter, St. John, Virgin Islands from R-4 (Residential-Medium Density) to B-1 (Business-Central Business District). The Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Division of Comprehensive & Coastal Zone Planning evaluated the requested zoning amendment along with the project and deemed the applicant's proposal compatible with the mixed-use character of the surrounding area. I am pleased to see our resilient Virgin Islanders finding alternatives for rebuilding businesses after the destructive Hurricanes we suffered in 2017 and also commend those who are going through the proper channels to be compliant with our zoning and permitting laws.

Although I have approved Bill No. 33-0006, an Act amending title 20 Virgin Islands Code, part II, chapter 37, subchapter II, section 407, which prohibits veterans who obtain taxi medallions at auction from selling the medallion to a person who is not a veteran, I must caution that further amendments are necessary to effectuate the actual intent of the bill and not infringe on the benefits intended to our veterans. I support the intent of this measure to protect and provide benefits to our veterans pursuant to the veterans' auction of medallions, but as written the measure also limits veterans who obtain medallions at the regular auction, an effect I doubt was intended by this Legislature. The bill currently states, "[a] veteran who acquires a medallion at an auction under this subsection may not sell the medallion to a person who is not a veteran", which suggests that this subsection addresses both the veterans' auction as well as the regular auction. As a result, a veteran who obtains a medallion at the regular auction will also be limited in his ability to transfer the non-veteran medallion. I strongly recommend that this oversight be addressed to truly effect the intent of this legislation, which is to protect our veterans by only limiting transfers of medallions purchased at the veterans' auction rather than all auctions.

As to Bill No. 33-0014 amending Section 13 of Act No. 7261 to increase the annual appropriation from the Internal Revenue Matching Fund to the Government Employees Retirement System (GERS) from \$7,000,000 to \$10,000,000 and allocating 60 percent of such payment to pay "direct contributions" and 40 percent as an outstanding employer contributions, I have also approved it with reservations. First, any amount owed by the Government is the subject of ongoing litigation. Second, the term "direct contribution" is an undefined and disputed term. And third, if the effort to reduce the outstanding payments is to be meaningful, the entire \$10,000,000 should be first applied to sums determined to be owed. The Administration looks forward to continuing efforts to work with the Legislature on reforming the GERS.

With respect to Bill No. 33-0032, An Act amending title 3, chapter 33, section 881 of the Virgin Islands Code to require the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Finance, and the Bureau of Information and Technology to establish an official internet website to provide the public with user-friendly access to financial information, this Bill seeks to codify and extend



an initiative already implemented by the Executive Branch of the V.I. to other Branches of Government and government agencies and instrumentalities. I have also approved this Bill but must point out a few concerns. First and foremost, the Executive Branch has already established a financial transparency website at [www.transparency.vi.gov](http://www.transparency.vi.gov) to which the public is already able to access financial information. It is to this website that the required links of information for the other mandated branches, agencies and instrumentalities will be connected. Second, compliance by the individual branches of government, agencies, and individual semi-autonomous agencies is dependent on each one bearing the financial and logistical responsibilities for implementation with the Bureau of Information Technology overseeing implementation. Thirdly, any limitations on the information divulged on the mandated financial website will be undertaken subject to the requirements of local law on the requirement elements for disclosure the required elements for disclosure. In this regard, the public will still be able to request certain employee information permitted by local law. Lastly, for the proper flow of the Virgin Islands Code, there are multiple numbering and lettering errors to be addressed as well as grammatical errors due to deletion and insertion of certain words.

With the expiring deadlines of the Medical Cannabis Patient Care Act as previously passed, I have signed into law Bill No. 33-0067 extending the time within which the Cannabis Advisory Board must propose Rules and Regulations for implementation of the chapter. I thank the Thirty-Third Legislature for the expeditious actions taken to extend these deadlines to allow the Virgin Islands sufficient time to carefully develop a comprehensive program properly from the onset.

I have also signed Bill No. 33-0070 authorizing the Government of the Virgin Islands, through the Commissioner of Finance to secure a revolving credit facility to pay service providers and other outstanding obligations pending the receipt and disbursement of funds by our federal partners in the hurricane recovery and restoration. We must all keep in mind that this is only one step in a multi-faceted process which will enable the Territory to eventually to put forth more rebuilding contracts and accelerate reconstruction. Most importantly, it will allow for our local contractors to compete and benefit from the projects.

I acknowledge receipt of Resolution No. 1850 to petition the United States Congress to provide subsidies to the U. S. Virgin Islands that will assist in the payment and reimbursement of earned income credit and child tax credits, and that will assist in paying the unfunded amount that the government of the Virgin Islands is unable to reimburse its residents.

I also acknowledge Resolution No. 1851, Bill No. 33-0058, honoring and commending our 2019 State Teacher of the Year, Ms. Kerra Samuel. The dedication and service of our teachers should be celebrated at every opportunity as they educate and help raise our future leaders.

Finally, I acknowledge receipt of Resolution No. 1852, Bill No. 33-0081, the Resolution reorganizing and re-establishing the Majority Caucus, electing officers, and re-appointing the

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chairpersons, vice chairpersons, and members of the standing committees of the Thirty Third Legislature.

I thank you and the members of the Thirty-Third Legislature for your continued efforts and hard work on behalf of our community. I look forward to our joint efforts in actively resolving the concerns facing our Territory today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Albert Bryan Jr.', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Albert Bryan Jr.  
Governor

*Enclosures*