

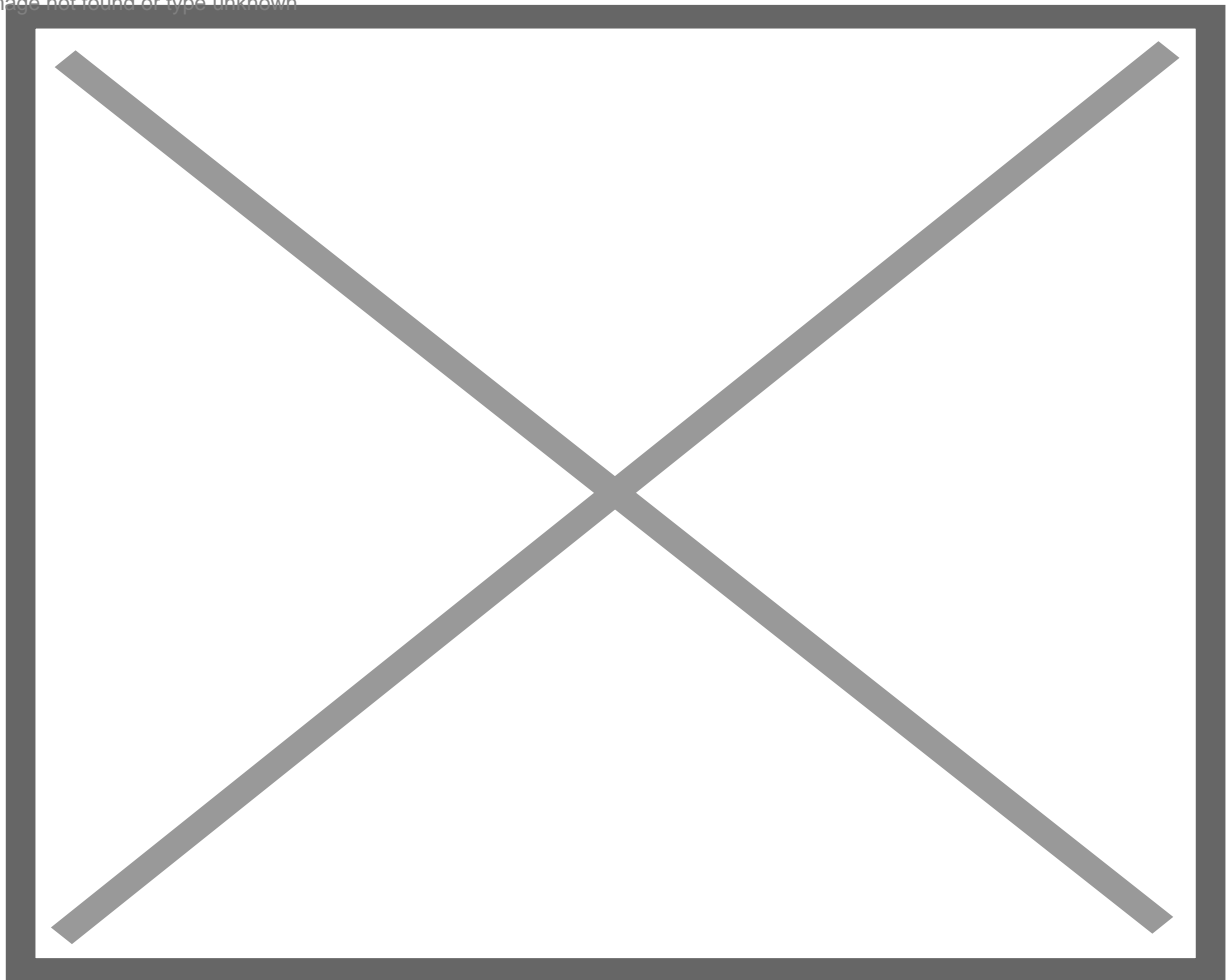
Lawmakers Override Bryan's Veto of "Fair Chance" Bill

Lawmakers also approved several other bills, including measures to regulate the real estate industry, lease agreements for local businesses, and a bill honoring reggae artist Vaughn Benjamin with a monument and park.

Senate / **Published On June 25, 2024 04:46 AM /**

Nelcia Charlemagne **June 25, 2024**

Image not found or type unknown



Members of the 35th Legislature voted to override Governor Albert Bryan Jr's veto of Bill 35-0115, "[The Fair Chance for Employment Act](#)" described as the "epitome of a second chance" for former offenders.

Originally sponsored by Senator Donna Frett-Gregory in March, the bill sought to require the Division of Personnel to develop fair chance hiring policies and delay the conduct of background checks by prospective employers until a conditional offer of employment has been extended to applicants. She appealed to her colleagues to support the measure as a way to "end stigma" toward

formerly incarcerated individuals who were interested in seeking meaningful work.

When Governor Bryan [vetoed the measure in April](#), he said it contained “overreaching components in the bill, particularly the severe criminal penalty for employers and the absence of a cap on damages for job applicants.” Frett-Gregory subsequently issued a release vowing to override the veto, with any adjustments to the legislation coming in the form of another draft bill, she had said. The lawmaker was successful in that quest on Monday evening, as all 13 members present voted to reverse Mr. Bryan’s action.?

The above measure was one of a series of bills, leases and rezoning that received the stamp of approval of local legislators. Among them were favorable votes for the ascension of Lindel Williams and Conn Davis Jr. to the [board of the Waste Management Authority](#).

Lawmakers also expressed overwhelming support for [Bill 35-0261](#), a lease agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands and Yvette and Dale Brown, doing business as Sejah Farm of the Virgin Islands, and [Bill 35-0241](#), granting a use variance for the establishment of a restaurant and fruit bar in Kings Quarter, St. Thomas. Despite some pushback, [Bill 35-0137](#), allowing Giffit Hill Land LLC to lease individual bedrooms under the category “Lodging/Rooming house” in Cruz Bay was also approved.

[Bill 35-0030](#), an act honoring and commending Vaughn Benjamin posthumously for his contributions to reggae music, also received high commendations from lawmakers. If passed into law, Mr. Benjamin, more popularly known as Akae Beka, will be honored with a monument and park in his name.

?Bills [35-0117](#) and [35-0193](#), companion bills seeking to regulate the real estate industry were also supported, along with Senator Samuel Carrion’s [Bill 35-0236](#), enacting the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (IDEA). Senator Milton Potter’s [Bill 35-0215](#), relating to assault rifles and firearm licensing, also garnered the favor of legislators.

Except for the Fair Chance Employment Act, which must now be signed into law unless challenged in court, the measures now all move to the desk of Governor Bryan for disposition.