

Senate Committee Backs Three of Governor Bryan's Board Nominees in Key Leadership Votes

Governor Bryan's nominees advanced after expressing strong commitments to education reform at UVI, contractor oversight, and banking modernization aimed at expanding financial access and public accountability.

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From left to right, Carolyn P. Hermon-Percell, Winston M.A. Williams Jr., and Kirk Callwood. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

The Senate Committee on Rules and Judiciary has approved three of Governor Albert Bryan Jr.'s nominees following a full day of vetting on Thursday. Carolyn P. Hermon-Percell, Winston M.A. Williams Jr., and Kirk Callwood all received favorable votes from

committee members, advancing their nominations to their respective boards.

First to appear was Carolyn P. Hermon-Percell, nominated to serve on the University of the Virgin Islands Board of Trustees. A former Superior Court judge and current St. Thomas/St. John commissioner on the Casino Control Commission, Ms. Hermon-Percell spoke of her longstanding relationship with UVI.

"I actively sought and asked that I'd be considered for the UVI Board of Trustees," she said, noting that she holds a Master of Public Administration from the university and is a lifetime member of its alumni association.

"My true interest is the well-being of the University of the Virgin Islands," she told lawmakers. She described regular visits to the campus, attendance at university events, and participation in fundraising activities. Acknowledging the challenges UVI faces—including declining enrollment and reductions in federal funding—she expressed confidence in her ability to contribute meaningfully. "I can use my legal education and years of experience to work with President George and the other trustees to prove myself an asset to UVI," she said.

Senators responded positively. Senator Angel Bolques Jr. said, "I already know without a doubt that you'll do a great job," and spoke with Hermon-Percell about strategies to increase UVI's appeal throughout the Caribbean basin. Senator Milton Potter stressed the importance of enrollment growth as a solution to decreased federal support.

Next was Winston M.A. Williams Jr., who was nominated to the Virgin Islands Board of Contractors, Trades, and Crafts. With extensive experience ranging from laborer and surveyor's assistant to senior vice president and project executive, Mr. Williams said, "I've managed over 1 million square feet of construction projects."

He also highlighted his commitment to mentorship, noting his former role as co-chair of the ACE Mentor Program of America, which introduces high school students to careers in architecture, construction, and engineering. Committee Chair Senator Carla Joseph encouraged him to continue mentoring future professionals in the field.

Should he be appointed, Williams said he plans to focus on educational initiatives aimed at helping individuals pass required contractor exams under Virgin Islands law. He also expressed interest in reviewing the current fee and fine structures to ensure they align with standards in similarly sized jurisdictions.

"This board has been stagnant for quite some time, so I'm pretty excited to see someone come up," remarked Senator Bolques, who shared that he has forwarded a St. John resident's name for consideration to join the board.

Senator Avery Lewis added that public education on "contractor rights [and] responsibilities" and the complaint process was essential to "protect our people."

The final nominee was Kirk Callwood, a former commissioner of Finance, who was nominated to serve on the Banking Board of the United States Virgin Islands. Callwood reminded senators of his previous involvement with the board as an ex officio member.

“I played an active role in critical regulatory approvals, including the board's unanimous decision to approve the licensure of Oriental Bank in the United States Virgin Islands,” he said. He currently serves with various organizations, including My Brother's Workshop.

“My vision for service on the Virgin Islands banking board is rooted in a simple but powerful principle that our financial system must be safe, fair and accessible to all territory residents,” he said. He emphasized the need to evolve financial systems without “compromising transparency and trust,” and cited his dual experience in banking and government finance.

Callwood also outlined his goals, which include promoting fintech applications, encouraging locally relevant digital banking models, and expanding access to capital for small businesses and underserved communities.

Senator Lewis asked for his “vision for the future of banking in the Virgin Islands,” to which Callwood responded with an emphasis on leveraging technology to make banking more accessible.

“You bring a lot to the table, so I think we're very fortunate that you've agreed to serve on this very important board,” said Senator Milton Potter. His remarks echoed the sentiments of other committee members, who voted unanimously in favor of Callwood's nomination.