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Virgin Islands Lawmakers Approve Key to the Territory and Road Renaming to Honor Soca Star Dennis “Pumpa” Liburd

Bill 36-0058, sponsored by Senator Marise James, celebrates Pumpa’s contributions to music and culture, renaming 6-Y Peters Rest Road in Christiansted “where it began,” while enshrining his legacy as a cultural ambassador rooted in St. Croix.

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Dennis “Pumpa” Lennox Leroy Liburd, Jr., the St. Croix soca star honored with the key to the Virgin Islands and a road named in his honor for his cultural impact. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE.

Virgin Islands soca star Dennis “Pumpa” Lennox Leroy Liburd, Jr. will receive the official key to the territory and a road named in his honor, as lawmakers took action to celebrate his “many contributions to the Virgin Islands culture and music industry.”

Bill 36-0058, sponsored by Senator Marise James, honors the iconic “A List” musician whose high-energy songs and performances have taken the Caribbean and globe by storm. She addressed Mr. Liburd directly during Monday’s meeting of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection, reminding him that he is “far more than a performer. You embody an energy, a discipline and a spirit of inspiration that have touched countless lives.”

She remarked that Pumpa is “widely regarded as one of the most dedicated and detail-oriented individuals in the music industry, always working with excellence, always uplifting those around you, and always leading with an enthusiasm that is contagious.”

Though born in St. Kitts and Nevis, Mr. Liburd moved to St. Croix as a teenager and has become a self-appointed ambassador for the United States Virgin Islands. “You have embraced this community as your home, and it is your home, and in turn, we embrace you as one of our own,” said Sen. James. “It’s why part of the honor includes renaming 6-Y Peters Rest Road, Christiansted, St. Croix, in his name. It’s an area Mr. Liburd referred to as “where it began.”

Plans are reportedly in the pipeline to spruce up that section of road. “This legislation ensures that your legacy is enshrined permanently in Virgin Islands history,” Sen. James affirmed.

Indeed, Pumpa has carried the Virgin Islands’ flag worldwide, stamping the territory’s presence in the contemporary soca scene. Kai Hendricks, who has maintained a friendship with the honoree for years, noted that “Pumpa never misses an opportunity to promote the Virgin Islands, whether it’s in a performance, an interview, a casual shout-out, or even an investment.”

Pumpa’s contribution to the community, through engagement in sports, education, and conversation, was also highlighted by Mr. Hendricks. “Although he could easily relocate somewhere with more convenience, more resources and more accessibility for his career, he has remained rooted here in St. Croix.”

Mr. Liburd also received high praise from Ian Turnbull, the director of the Division of Festivals. “Earning the key to the city is more than a symbolic honor. It is a recognition of impact. Pumpa's journey reflects dedication, resilience and a deep love for his community,” Mr. Turnbull stated. He, like others, praised Pumpa for his contributions to keeping the culture alive. “He has inspired young people to pursue their passions, reminded us to take pride in our identity, and shown that success is possible without ever losing connection to your home,” added Mr. Turnbull.

Patriotism was a common thread in each testimony. “I think he embodies the best of everything that the Virgin Islands can bring to ourselves,” said Yohannes Worede, President, USVI Soccer Federation & Peters Rest Apts. Inc.

Ushana Khublal, Pumpa’s manager, agreed, stating that “Pumpa represents for the Virgin Islands like no one I’ve ever seen.” Visibly emotional, she was pleased that Pumpa would soon receive his proverbial flowers. “It is just the beginning,” she promised him.

Monday’s meeting was star-studded, with video endorsements from Dominica’s Asa Banton, Trinidad and Tobago’s Machel Montano, and the USVI’s very own Bryan “Benny Demus”

Boulai.

“Music was birthed in me... I don't know myself without music,” declared a jubilant Dennis Pumpa Liburd, delighted following all the testimonies.

He fielded questions from excited lawmakers, including queries about what he could do to “pass the baton onto the next generation.” Responding to Senator Carla Joseph, Pumpa said that passing Bill 36-0058 is “definitely a good start.”

The government, too, has to play a part, Pumpa said. He informed lawmakers that in some Caribbean islands, artists are paid a monthly stipend for their role in promoting their nations. “When it comes to the economy, we play a big role in uplifting the economy,” he reminded Sen. Joseph.

Senator Alma Francis Heyliger agreed, noting that “we probably have to do a much better job in pairing a little bit more with our musicians here in the territory as a way to push out a marketing strategy.” It’s something for Ian Turnbull and the Department of Tourism to figure out.

Mr. Liburd also thinks that music “needs to get more deeply back into the school system.” Reintroducing elementary-level music programs could be “beautiful,” he told lawmakers.

“I'm really proud of you. I want you to keep this passion going and try to motivate more young people. ” Senator Hubert Frederick pleaded.

The hearing to honor Pumpa was filled with praise, and the occasional warning for the Department of Tourism to ensure his compensation at local festivities is commensurate with his regional counterparts.

“I never thought I would have been alive to witness these things,” Pumpa stated. Soon, he’ll have a physical representation of the territory’s appreciation for his work. “Big up all the musicians, all the DJs, the whole entertainment body in the Virgin Islands. This one is for us,” he announced.