

logo not found or type unknown

Bolongo Bay Head Start Facility Naming Advances for Dilsa Capdeville After 60 Years of Protecting Women and Children

Bill 36-0114 would name the Bolongo Bay Head Start Facility for Dilsa Capdeville, whose work includes becoming the first territorial child abuse specialist, creating the first child abuse task force, founding Kidscope and helping establish Nana Baby Home.

Community Center / **Published On May 11, 2026 07:04 AM /**

Nelcia Charlemagne **May 11, 2026**

Image not found or type unknown



Dilsa Capdeville. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

The Bolongo Bay Head Start Facility could soon bear the name of Dilsa Capdeville, honoring a woman credited with dedicating six decades to protecting women and children in the U.S. Virgin Islands through social services, child abuse prevention, domestic violence advocacy and the

creation of institutions that supporters say changed the territory.

Thursday's meeting of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection drew a full house, with friends, former colleagues, mentees and lawmakers commending Ms. Capdeville's contributions to social services and her advocacy for abused women and children.

Bill No. 36-0114, sponsored by Senator Carla Joseph, would name the facility in Ms. Capdeville's honor. Senator Joseph described her as a "champion for our children and a beacon of hope for families."

According to Senator Joseph, Ms. Capdeville's mission to serve began in high school, when she worked at the former Department of Social Welfare. She later became the first territorial child abuse specialist and created the territory's first child abuse task force. Senator Joseph said Ms. Capdeville helped ensure that "our laws will protect the most vulnerable among us."

Ms. Capdeville is also credited with hosting the first Caribbean Conference on Child Sexual Abuse. In 1997, she founded Kidscope, "the first child abuse advocacy centre in the Caribbean, providing forensic interviews, counseling and advocacy for children in need," Senator Joseph shared.

Now 76, Ms. Capdeville also played an instrumental role in the establishment of the Nana Baby Home and the Family Resource Center, Inc.

"This act will serve as a lasting tribute to her unwavering commitment to the betterment of the Virgin Islands and our people," Senator Joseph said.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. also supported the recognition. In a letter submitted to the committee, he said that since Head Start facilities provide "essential early childhood education and family support services," it is "especially fitting that the facility bear the name of someone who has dedicated her life to uplifting and empowering others."

Former Senator Myron Jackson, who has known Ms. Capdeville for several years, reflected on her efforts to protect, care for and rehabilitate women and children affected by domestic violence, child abuse, sexual abuse, trafficking and psychological trauma.

Yvette Finch, a longtime friend, testified on behalf of herself and her family. "From an early age, Delta showed a natural passion for helping others," Ms. Finch said. She recalled that Ms. Capdeville often worked alongside the Virgin Islands Police Department, providing a critical social service.

"Dilsa embodies the spirit of service. Her work in creating a safe, non-judgmental zone for survivors of domestic violence has provided comfort and hope to so many," Ms. Finch remarked.

Dr. Angelina Prince, who worked with Ms. Capdeville for several years, spoke about the sacrifices Ms. Capdeville made while serving the people of the Virgin Islands. She recalled that Ms. Capdeville once sold her car to continue funding Kidscope.

"She faced litigation, threats of death, coercion and bankruptcy, all in the name of protecting our children," Dr. Prince testified.

Anya Stuart, executive director of the Family Resource Center, said Ms. Capdeville has “absolutely refused to let our community accept abuse as normal or inevitable.”

“When children walk into a building bearing her name, they will be working into a legacy of protection, learning and hope,” Ms. Stuart declared.

Tonia Garnett delivered emotional testimony, telling lawmakers that Ms. Capdeville returned to the work even after surviving four different types of cancer.

“Her legacy is not only in the organizations that she has helped build, but in the generations of children who are safer today and the women who have found refuge and healing,” Ms. Garnett said.

Lawmakers were visibly moved by the testimony.

“You're a very strong woman. You're the modern-day Queen Mary,” Senator Franklin Johnson declared.

“What you have done for 1000s of individuals to include a mentorship for many individuals in the field speaks volumes,” Senator Marvin Blyden said. He described renaming the Bolongo Bay Head Start Facility in her honor as a “little pittance of our love.”

Senator Milton Potter said he was in awe of Ms. Capdeville’s work.

“She didn't wait for legislation to act. She built the task forces, she built the training programs, she built the advocacy centers, she built the coalitions,” he said.

Thursday’s discussion also featured personal anecdotes from Ms. Capdeville, including a story about using money meant for her own home’s light bill to pay the bill for a woman in need, leaving herself without power. She also called on lawmakers to join her mission.

Dr. Prince advocated for funding for Kidscope, which now stands shuttered, creating what she described as a massive gap.

Ms. Capdeville said she was honored by the proposed naming, while joking that the recognition would also give her reason to check in on the facility.

“I'm honored and humbled to now have a place where I could drive by every day and go unannounced to make sure things are going as they should,” Ms. Capdeville said, laughing as well. “And now that many of you have given us an open invitation. We're going to come calling and see what we can do to help,” she said to the senators.

Bill No. 36-0114 now moves to the Committee on Rules and Judiciary.