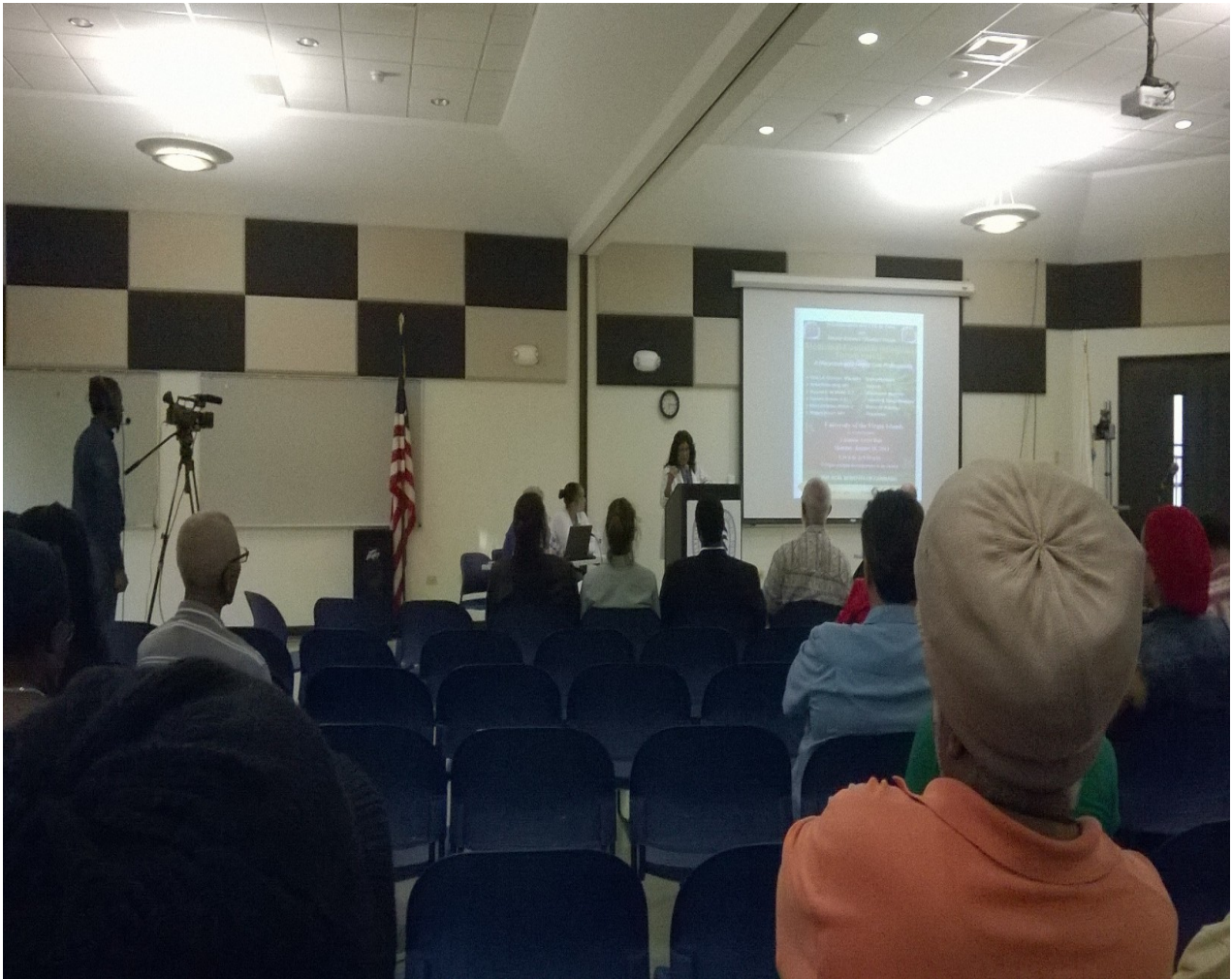


The Virgin Islands Consortium

At Medicinal Marijuana Forum, Only Supporters

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Attending the second Medicinal Marijuana forum held last night at the University of the Virgin Islands Great Hall, sponsored by the University and main crusader Senator Terrence Nelson, one thing was clear: the majority of the people in attendance supported the idea of legalizing Medicinal Marijuana in the Virgin Islands.

The forum featured four doctors as panelist, all of whom spoke of the benefits of the cannabis plant and gave testimonies of people who, after trying other methods to rid their bodies of illnesses with cancer being the most mentioned, turned to the plant and found that they were on the verge of being completely healed. The testimonies ignited cheers throughout the night, revealing that most in attendance were supporters.

For his part, Senator Nelson wants "the public to hear from medical professionals," he said. Earlier on the Senator revealed that his "desire is to get a clear indication from the voting public [on] whether or not they want us to go further", adding that he believes there will be "overwhelming support for the measure" on November 4th.

Recently Governor John P. deJongh signed into law a bill sponsored by Nelson that places a Medical Marijuana referendum on the November 4th ballot.

"I have approved the following measure: Bill No. 300444, allowing for a referendum election on the cultivation and use of marijuana for medicinal and research purposes," the Governor wrote in a transmittal letter to Senate President Shawn-Michael Malone.

Elated, Senator Nelson said that he was "truly pleased that the governor will let democracy take place. This is the right thing to do. Thank you Governor deJongh."

Prominent Virgin Islands medical professional Dr. Cora Christian, passionately highlighted the benefits of the marijuana plant and said that it was only in recent history that it was classified as a control substance. She also gave her background in the medical field as she built up towards promoting the benefits of marijuana.

Dr. Christian said that the plant reduces pain, anxiety, pressure, inflammation, nausea and vomiting. Marijuana also stimulates digestion -- that is why it's used to treat HIV patients and other wasting away diseases, she said.

"This is not what we are saying as panelists, this is what the science is saying," Christian said.

Some in attendance also gave testimonies, with one person saying that marijuana is a plant sent from God.

"The doctor said I needed six months of chemotherapy and I developed awful side effects, with the worst one being nausea," said Troy Schuster, the owner of Medical Center Shoppe located in Sunny Isle adjacent to Banco Popular.

Schuster said he smoked marijuana in the mornings, which would stop the nauseating feeling and soothe the pain he would feel in his bones.

"We need marijuana," Schuster said passionately. "It is a gift from God."

Nelson said that he has been forced to defend his character and parenting values since proposing the legislation, but vowed to push forward with yet another forum and rally before the general election. He did not, however, reveal whether the attacks were because of his proclaimed end-goal being the total legalization of marijuana, medical or recreational, in the Virgin Islands. The Senator has also pushed legislation to decriminalize the plant.

"We all share concerns for our children and drug use," Nelson said. "But we have to be open-minded enough to allow sick people an opportunity to use a non-toxic drug."

Doctors in attendance included:

- Cora Christian, MD, MPH (family medicine)
- Richard Goulding, MD (surgeon)
- Manuel da Motta, D.C. (chiropractic medicine)
- Carmen Cintron, D.O. (international and energy medicine)

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