

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Senator Novelle Francis To Host Symposium On Crime

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ST. CROIX -- Senator Novelle Francis will host the first annual crime symposium on Tuesday, February 23, a press release Mr. Francis' office issued late Wednesday has revealed. Above, Mr. Francis at a crime scene near the Red Brick Apartments in September, 2015, the height of criminal activity in the territory last year, [where "hundreds of shots" had reportedly been fired](#) between warring cliques.

The symposium, titled "Breaking the School to Prison Pipeline" will be held at the Great Hall on the University of the Virgin Islands here from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

According to the release, Mr. Francis hopes the symposium will stimulate better practices designed to target those at-risk youth who are more prone to go straight from the school

system into the criminal justice system.

“It’s time for a meaningful discussion on breaking the cycle that has carried too many of our young people straight from the classroom to Golden Grove,” he stated. “For too long, our strategies for problems like this have been reactive instead of proactive. In the meantime, our young people aren’t reaching their full potential as contributing members of our society.”

Featured presenter Dr. Kimberly Mills, who is the associate director of the U.V.I. Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, will present research findings on the school to prison phenomenon. A variety of government and community agencies are expected to participate in the day-long symposium, including the Bureau of Corrections, the Virgin Islands Police Department, the St. Croix Foundation and the Department of Human Services.

Mr. Francis, who chairs the Committee on Homeland Security, Public Safety and Justice, encouraged the community to join in the discussion and to also attend the event.

“The school to prison pipeline doesn’t exist through the fault of any one agency or individual. It’s a community issue and we should all have a vested interest in ending this vicious cycle,” he concluded.

For more information or to register, contact 712-2320 or email senatorfrancis@legvi.org.