

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Millin Young Bill, To Be Heard April 6, Seeks To Transform Catherineberg Into Museum

Government / **Published On March 26, 2017 09:49 AM /**

Donna Bellot **March 26, 2017**



ST. THOMAS -- A bill proposed by Senator Janette Millin Young, which provides a solution to the use of the Catherineberg residence, will be heard in the Committee on Finance on April 6.

The historic mansion—commonly known as the Governor's Mansion—is currently used as the official residence of the governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands; however, it has gone unoccupied for some time due to concerns of mold and other health-related issues. As a result, the use of alternative residences in lieu of the Governor's Mansion, has been a cause of discord among Virgin Islanders, since it comes at a high cost to taxpayers.

According to Mrs. Millin Young, “Bill No. 32-002 intends to offset a small portions of the monies owed to our government by the West Indian Company Limited (WICO), which owns the property, by having them fund the conversion of the estate into a museum.” Mrs. Millin Young believes that Catherineberg may create a new revenue stream for the territory as a museum, because it may potentially attract tourists to learn more about the Virgin Islands.

“There are tremendous opportunities to be had by changing the use of this residence. It should not sit and not be used. This is a revenue-generating opportunity where we can teach our visitors about our culture and history in a very historic setting,” said Mrs. Millin Young.

In April, 2015, [the senator had sought to change](#) the ownership of Catherineberg from WICO to the Government of the Virgin Islands, through Bill No. 31-0052, for a sum of \$3.3 million. However, since WICO owed the government back then about \$3.3 million in taxes, the government would not have actually paid any money to WICO. At the time, the legislation sat at the Senate Committee on Finance pending further action.

Governor Mapp also commented on the matter in 2015, [telling The Consortium](#) he believed that repairs to Catherineberg were well overdue, as well as a determination as to what should be the final purpose of the aging mansion.

Mrs. Millin Young now believes that the successful passage of Bill No. 32-002 will not only generate revenues for the territory, but could also prove beneficial for local manufacturers, visitors, the tourism industry, and the local government’s coffers. She envisions Catherineberg being transformed into a “living” museum with local craftsmen, entrepreneurs and entertainers displaying the islands' culture alongside curated exhibits. She hopes to see steelpan players, quelbe dancers, musicians, school groups and others, performing on the grounds.

The Senator encourages the public to call her office with their questions, concerns or input at 340-693-3521 or email her office at iwilliams@legvi.org.