

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Horse Racing Commission Nominees Move Forward; So Too Does Bill Curtailing Mapp's Emergency Declaration Powers

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ST. THOMAS -- Laura Palminteri and Sheldon Turnbull, seen above, were approved in the Committee on Rules and Judiciary today to serve on the VI Horse Racing Commission in the St. Thomas-St. John District.

Ms. Palminteri, a doctor, has over twenty years of experience working with thoroughbred racing in the territory. She has a veterinary medical background and has worked as a track veterinarian for Yonkers Raceway, Meadowlands Racetrack, Monticello Racetracks, Belmont Racetrack and Goshen Raceway, according to a release the

Legislature issued Thursday. "As a member, I would strive to elevate and modernize the standards of racing in the territory and to make it as safe as possible for both the animals and jockey," she said.

Some senators expressed concerns of conflict of interest with Ms. Palminteri becoming a member of the commission, as she is the only veterinarian specializing in equine care in the territory. In response, Ms. Palminteri stated that neither positions affect her role in horse racing from a medical standpoint, because she must examine each horse before the race.

In responding to a question posed by Senator Novelle Francis, who chairs the committee, on how he would attempt to level the races between St. Thomas and St. Croix, Mr. Turnbull said, "There is not a balance between holiday weekend races. Previously, there was a conflict with scheduling races, which hurts the industry."

Mr. Turnbull said one of his goals if approved would be to unify horse racing rules and operations, while balancing out the races between the districts.

In other action, lawmakers voted and approved the following bills below (all items approved will be forwarded to the full body for further consideration):