

The Virgin Islands Consortium

U.S. Selective Service Director To Meet With St. Thomas Officials And Educators In Efforts To Increase Virgin Islands Registration Rates

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ST. THOMAS -- Young men ages 18 through 25 in the U.S. Virgin Islands are at risk of losing key benefits that are tied to registering with the United States Selective Service System (SSS), because they fail to register in time, a release issued by Selective Service System on Monday said.

According to the release, each year hundreds of men lose benefits for life because they fail to register before they turn 26 years old. In his continuing efforts to improve registration rates, Director of the U.S. Selective Service System (SSS), Donald M.

Benton, is visiting St. Thomas October 23. He will be accompanied by State Director, Warrington O. Tyson from St. Thomas and the Selective Service Region Director, Carlos Perez, according to the release.

One in the territory, Mr. Benton will meet with Delegate Stacy Plaskett and Senator Myron Jackson to enhance efforts and generate greater awareness about the importance of registration, according to the release. There will be an evening event at the Port of Sale Mall in Havensight where Mr. Tyson will be presented an Eagle for his consistent superior performance of the Region VI SSS team. In attendance will be Selective Service Board Members, District Appeal Board Members, local high school principals and JROTC senior Army instructors, the release said.

"I am concerned about the registration rates of the Virgin Islands 18-year-old men. Less than 60 percent of young men register when they turn 18, as is required by law, Mr. Benton explained. "We are working to do our utmost to make sure the Virgin Islands improves its rates and that young men and influencers know about the importance of registration. We want to reach out to young men so that they are aware, register and protect their benefits."

Failure to register can present significant road blocks to a man's future opportunities, according to the release. Registration is linked to numerous federal and state benefits. These include access to all federal student loans and grants; job training programs; eligibility for almost all federal jobs, including the U.S. Postal Service; and numerous state, municipal, and federal contractor jobs. Immigrant men who wish to become citizens may have the process significantly delayed if they don't register.

Mr. Benton explained that it's simple for young men to maintain eligibility for important benefits. "Just go online at www.sss.gov or register at a local U.S. Post Office," he said. Young men can also register by visiting their high school counselor. Benton stressed, "The end result is that 45 seconds online at SSS.gov can potentially save you 45 years of headaches due to lost opportunities."

For more information related to this release, or to interview Mr. Benton, please contact State Director Tyson at 340-775-9197 or Mr. Carlos Perez at 678-464-2307.