

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Barbara McIntosh, Anthony Thomas And Joel Lee Get Favorable Nod From Rules Committee

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While Joel Lee, Governor Albert Bryan's pick to lead the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and Anthony Thomas, Mr. Bryan's choice for the Department of Property and Procurement, were all given favorable nods in the Committee on Rules and Judiciary during a daylong confirmation hearing at the Senate on Thursday, it was Barbara McIntosh, chosen by Mr. Bryan to lead the Bureau of Motor Vehicle, who impressed the senators the most with her knowledge, preparedness, and what appeared to be a robust plan to bring B.M.V. into the 21st Century.

While the three nominees were forwarded favorably to the full body, Committee Chair Alicia Barnes noticed a pattern with at least three of the nominees -- Mr. Lee, Mr.

Thomas and Racquel Berry-Benjamin, who was nominated to head the Department of Education. Ms. Barnes said she was concerned that the nominees' testimonies were superficial, and when it was time to provide answers, they struggled. The chairwoman said part of the blame should lay with the governor who chose the nominees and those chosen to prepare them for the hearing.

To that end, Ms. Barnes requested that the committee [*hold the nomination of Ms. Berry-Benjamin*](#), a setback for the Bryan administration. The governor issued a statement following the hearing, thanking the lawmakers for supporting three of his nominees.

"The confirmation process is an essential exercise of our representative government where the people, through their representatives, get to vet the qualifications of members appointed to the governor's cabinet," Mr. Bryan said. "I am proud of our cabinet members who appeared before the Legislature today. They demonstrated vision, energy, and passion for public service. Today's hearing highlights the fact we have the right leadership at the helm of our departments and agencies. We understand the critical importance of these agencies, and we fully understand the role of the Legislature in exercising its due diligence."

He added, "I thank the Chairwoman, Senator Alicia Barnes and the members of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary for their favorable recommendation of our commissioner and directors nominee to the Committee of the Whole for confirmation and look forward to a further confirmation opportunity for the commissioner of Education nominee."

Feature Image: Barbara McIntosh, courtesy VI Legislature