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Bill Prohibiting Illegal Importation of Snakes, Another Addressing Maternal Mental Health Among Measures Approved in Rules Committee

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The Committee on Rules and Judiciary, aside from taking on WAPA with [thrice the force](#), approved a number of other measures on Tuesday, including a bill seeking to ban the illegal importation of snakes and other animal species into the USVI; another addressing maternal mental health; and a bill calling on the Waste Management Authority to create sites throughout the territory for the disposal of tires, to name a few.

Here are the measures that passed the committee along with their description:

[Bill No. 33-0246](#), an Act amending title 19, chapter 45 of the Virgin Islands Code adding subchapter VI relating to maternal mental health sponsored by Senator Allison DeGazon and co-

sponsored by Senators Oakland Benta and Marvin Blyden.

A portion of the bill, seen [here](#), reads, "The Commissioner of Health shall work with health care facilities, licensed health and mental health care professionals, the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program, mental health advocates, consumers, and families in the Territory to develop materials and information about postpartum depression, including treatment resources, and develop policies and procedures to comply with this subchapter."

Bill No. 33-0103, an Act amending provisions of the Virgin Islands Code by adding a new section providing for maternity, paternity, and adoption leave for government employees; by adding new sections and providing for learning evaluation of children, postpartum care and minimum standards of health care for incarcerated women and men; by establishing a new procedure for obtaining an initial birth certificate; by prohibiting the use of corporal punishment; and by adding a new section providing for paid time off from work so that parents may visit their children's schools; and providing that certain health care facilities hire discharge planners not later than January 2020. The measure was sponsored by Senator Janelle K. Sarauw and co-sponsored by Myron D. Jackson.

Bill No. 33-0115, an Act amending title 24, chapter 14 of the Virgin Islands Code, by inserting a new section relating to the transfer of the Virgin Islands Labor Management Committee as a division within the Public Employees' Relations Board. The measure was sponsored by Senator Kurt Vialet and co-sponsored by Senators Allison DeGazon and Senator Marvin Blyden.

Bill No. 33-0348, an Act amending title 27 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 1, subchapter I relating to licensing of medical professionals to provide for a two-year licensure period to allow physician assistants to prescribe, dispense and administer schedule II through V narcotic drugs and non-narcotic drugs to the extent delegated by a physician. The measure was sponsored by Sen. Sarauw.

Bill No. 33-0198, an Act amending title 14, chapter 7, section 192 of the Virgin Islands Code by increasing the penalty for the illegal importation of snakes and imposing penalties for the importation of animals or species not indigenous to the Virgin Islands, which may pose a threat to the ecosystem of the Virgin Islands and the people of the Virgin Islands. The measure was sponsored by Senator Athneil Thomas and co-sponsored by Sen. DeGazon.

Bill No. 33-0325, sponsored by Sen. Alicia Barnes, seeks to amend title 23, chapter 10, subchapter 1 of the Virgin Islands code relating to emergencies and major disasters by adding a section 1017 to prohibit unconscionable pricing of goods and services during a declaration of a state of emergency.

And **Bill No. 33-0111**, sponsored by Mr. Francis, seeks to amend title 19, part VI of the Virgin Islands Code by adding a new chapter 56b, requiring that the Waste Management Authority designate disposal sites throughout the territory for waste tires, and creating the Waste Tire Management and Disposal Fund.