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# Senate Committee OK'd a Full Slate of Nominations to Various Government Boards: Names Now Go To Full Legislature for Approval

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Robert Moore **November 17, 2019**

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**Janelle K. Sarauw** By. VI Legislature

More than a dozen nominees to various Virgin Islands governmental boards were approved by the Senate Committee on Rules and the Judiciary last week, clearing the way for a full Senate vote on the posts.

The Rules and Judiciary panel, chaired by Sen. Janelle K. Sarauw, convened for votes at the Capitol Building on St. Thomas on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

**Virgin Islands Board of Pharmacy for the St. Thomas-St. John District:** Danson Nganga and Dr. Vernique Caswell, Pharm. D.

Mr. Nganga noted that one of their top priorities for serving on the V.I. Board of Pharmacy is to ensure all rights, access, and privileges offered to retail pharmacies in the U.S. mainland are also available to the territory.

Similarly, Nominee Caswell said their primary focus is to provide support for pharmacists by gaining access to resources offered by the National Association of Board of Pharmacies.

**Virgin Islands Board of Pharmacy St. Croix District:** Laura Forbes. Ms. Forbes defended their re-nomination to the Board, citing their work assisting with the development of the revised pharmacy inspection form/process, disseminating pharmacists administered vaccines, and establishing the non-resident pharmacy registration form/process.

**V.I. Board of Psychology Examiners St. Thomas-St. John District:** Dr. Ramona Moss, Ph.D., NCSP and Nicolette Cutright, Ph.D.

Challenges that Ms. Moss said they would tackle on the V.I. Board of Psychology Examiners is to identify whether on-line schools affect the quality of education for students and to develop strategies to provide psychological services to people as needed.

**Substance Abuse Counselor for the V.I. Board of Licensed Counselors and Examiners St. Thomas-St. John District:** Curtis Callender, MS, LMHC, NCC. Ms. Callendar mentioned that as a Substance Abuse Counselor for the V.I. Board of Licensed Counselors and Examiners, their aim is to shape the landscape of mental health in the Territory. "I pledge to uphold the duty of not only ensuring that clinicians meet the standards as laid out but also take action when harmful/unethical actions threaten the safety of the public and credibility of the field," said Callendar.

**V.I. Board of Optometrical Examiners St. Croix District:** Dr. Lisa Adams-Mahepeth, O.D. Ms. Adams-Mahepeth served on the V.I. Board of Optometrical Examiners for fifteen years. They said they will continue to align the standards of Optometry practiced in the Virgin Islands with the National Board of Examiners in Optometry.

**VMD for the V.I. Board of Examiners for Practice of Veterinary Medicine St. Thomas-St. John District:** Dr. Laura Palminteri. Defending their reappointment to the Board, Ms. Palminteri noted that they wants to continue to be an asset to the Board. They have practiced veterinary medicine for twenty-eight years and served on the Board for fifteen years.

**V.I. Coastal Zone Management Commission St. Thomas-St. John District:** Jawanza Wallace-Hillare. Mr. Wallace-Hillare said they will work towards obtaining funds from grants and to develop a partnership with Federal Programs while serving on the V.I. Coastal Zone Management Commission.

**V.I. Board of Dental Examiners St. Croix District:** Emmanuel Delano, DDS, MS. Mr. Delano defended their re-nomination to the V.I. Board of Dental Examiners by sharing

some of the significant changes made while serving for the past ten years. They indicated that previously the Board revised the 2014 Dental Act. As a result, the Board is up-to-par with the national standards of qualifications to practice dentistry in the Territory. Additionally, revising the rules and regulations continues to be a work in progress. In response to a line of questioning from Sen. Sarauw, Delano noted that the Board is presently advocating for better dental care by increasing the number of dentists practicing in the Territory.

**V.I. Board of Medical Examiners:** Dr. Mavis Matthew, M.D. Ms. Matthew stated that their re-nomination to serve on the V.I. Board of Medical Examiners allows their to continue the necessary tasks. They served on the Board for the past five years. Two of their major accomplishments include the removal of the Spex Exam and the implementation of the Uniform Application which is utilized to streamline the physician application process, they said.

**Government Employees Service Commission St. Croix District:** John Abramson, Jr. Mr. Abramson stated that their primary aim for the Commission is to establish a Comprehensive Healthcare System that unifies both insured and uninsured people. "Look at the big picture of healthy government employees and retirees. Then there is an unhealthy dying community. That is not good for the overall state of health care in the Territory," said Abramson.

**Government Employees Service Commission St. Thomas-St. John District:** Andre' Dorsey and Loraine Gumbs-Morton. Although, Ms. Gumbs-Morton admitted that they are not an insurance expert, their mission to improve the operation of the V.I. Government Employees Service Commission is to ensure that the life and medical insurance coverage is suitable to meet the needs of policyholders, fulfilling necessary tasks in alignment with the Virgin Islands Code, and to assist with revising protocols as required.

Ms. Dorsey indicated that their goals are to eliminate high healthcare costs, lower co-payments, and to remove deductibles from member's health insurance plan. Furthermore, Dorsey mentioned that they will strive towards establishing Urgent Care Centers, implementing additional preventative care services and increasing wellness initiatives.

## **Committee on Rules and Judiciary Action on Bills**

### **Committee lawmakers approved:**

Bill No. 33-0207: An Act requiring persons teaching children in Kindergarten-4 through third grade to have specific early childhood education requirements outlined by the Board of Education, and providing funding for early childhood educators to obtain the minimum requirements. Sponsor of the bill, Sen. Donna Frett-Gregory indicated that the bill does not require teachers to be certified. However, it requires educators who are teaching pre-kindergarteners to meet requisite skills.

Bill No. 33-0152: An Act regarding protections construction liens for government-owned property of homeowners under government-administered home repair and construction programs, and providing protection to certain homesteaders and for other related purposes.

