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Education Commissioner Condemns Abuse of Children in Wake of C.A.H.S. Coach Arrest on Molestation of Minors, Child Pornography Charges

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Dept. of Education Commissioner Racquel Berry-Benjamin in an open letter Friday vehemently condemned the abuse of minors, stating that she "holds the safety and wellbeing of students as top priorities. "

The denouncement comes in light of the [recent federal arrest of Alfredo Bruce Smith](#), 50, an employee of the Dept. of Education who allegedly molested multiple minor boys while he served as head coach and school monitor at the Charlotte Amalie High School in St. Thomas.

Homeland Security Investigations began an investigation into Smith's alleged activities after receiving reports that he inappropriately touched a minor during a school-sponsored track and

field trip in March 2021, and that there were photographs of juvenile males who attended CAHS in Smith's cellular phone. One witness reported that over six young males confided that they had been molested or raped by the Smith.

On Friday, Ms. Berry-Benjamin said D.O.E. has been cooperating with the investigation. "With the recent arrest of one of our employees for alleged molestation of multiple minors and production of child pornography, my team and I are deeply troubled by these very serious allegations and are cooperating fully with authorities. We have acted swiftly to review our existing systems designed to protect our children and identify ways to further strengthen those systems," she said.

The commissioner added, "To the parents of the victims, the leadership at the V.I. Department of Education understands your feelings of anger, hurt and disappointment. We are also processing the same emotions, as we, too, are hurt, angered, and disappointed by this situation. We are here to support you in every way and are committed to doing whatever is necessary to ensure the continued safety of the children entrusted to our care.

"Virgin Islands community, we all have been impacted by this news. This painful incident is not representative of the Virgin Islands public education system, but it has brought to light areas that need shoring up within our system. We are doing the work and invite you to partner with us. I urge you to intervene and report any suspected child predators and any suspicious activity involving children by dialing 911 or contacting Homeland Security Investigations at 1-800-981-3030. Moreover, I ask you to encourage students to tell a trusted adult, friend, or family member, or dial 911 if they are experiencing any form of abuse.

"As this matter goes through the legal system, it is my prayer that justice will be done, and the victims will find healing and peace.

"Please join me in saying a special prayer for our students today."

According to court documents, a search of Smith's social media account revealed dozens of photographs and sex videos of minor males and their genitals. A federal search warrant was executed on August 31, 2021, at the Defendant's residence. According to court documents, a video depicting a sex act was located on a camcorder belonging to CAHS, which was located in the Defendant's bedroom. The sex act appears to take place within the school.

Smith is charged with a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2251, sexual exploitation of children. If convicted, Smith faces a penalty of 15 to 30 years in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The investigation is being conducted by Homeland Security Investigations. Assistant U.S. Attorney Natasha Baker is prosecuting the case.

