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# Rules and Judiciary Committee Approves Bill Re-Establishing Virtual Information System in Schools

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The Senate Committee on Rules and Judiciary last week approved legislation the would reinvigorate the Virgin Islands Virtual Information System (VIVIS), an initiative first established under the John deJongh administration in 2013.

The measure re-establishes the VIVIS within the V.I. Department of Education (D.O.E.), providing for new protocols regarding personal information, approved data uses, and maintaining the confidentiality and distribution of data. The VIVIS was put in place back in 2013 at a cost of more than \$2.6 million, but according to school officials, has large gaps in its data.

“We need a depository for the data. We cannot manage what we can’t measure. Data collected will assist in making informed decisions where it is applicable,” said Sen. Janelle Sarauw, chair of

the Rules Committee and one of the sponsors of the bill. The other sponsor is Sen. Donna Frett Gregory and Sen. Stedman Hodge, Jr. is a co-sponsor.

Reuben Molloy, deputy commissioner of the Department of Health said the VIVIS is essential to have access to data on social determinants of health, critical to the effective planning of health promotion and prevention programs.

Noreen Michael, research director at the University of the Virgin Islands, indicated that quarterly updates on challenges should be required, assigning an identifier to each record is necessary, and identifying a steady funding source are key to the success of VIVIS.

In 2013, the U.S. Department of Education awarded the VIDOE with a grant totaling \$2.6 million to develop VIVIS in conjunction with an Early Childhood Integrated System. The Early Childhood Integrated System is slated to collect, store, and report data on children beginning from birth up to eight years old, according to Michal Rhymer-Brown, Assistant Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services.

Sen. Javan James security is vital if the system is to have real value.

“It is about time that we are up to par with digitizing the government which is already implemented on the mainland. My concern is ensuring that cybersecurity is of the utmost importance. Otherwise, if the system is hacked, the enemy will have access to a lot of sensitive information,” Sen. James said.

The VIVIS legislation approved by the Rules and Judiciary Committee is recorded as Bill No. 33-0189 — An Act amending Title 3, chapter 7 of the Virgin Islands Code.

Separately, policymakers voted and approved the following:

- Bill No. 33-0190- An Act amending Title 3, chapter 13, section 218(a) and title 21, chapter 2, section 103 of the Virgin Islands Code transferring various duties and responsibilities from the Department of Property and Procurement and to the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority.
- Bill No. 33-0145- An Act amending Title 2, chapter 2, section 22 of the Virgin Islands Code by requiring the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to conduct a mid-year review of the budget and to report the review findings to the Chair of the Committee on Finance and the Post Audit Division of the Legislature.
- Bill No. 33-0069- An Act amending Title 3, chapter 1 of the Virgin Islands Code relating to the issuance of and usage of government credit cards.
- Bill No. 33-0064- An Act appropriating \$500,000 from the Anti-Litter and Beautification Fund to the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority to be used exclusively for the purchase of surveillance cameras to be installed at selected bin sites.
- Bill No. 33-0034- An Act amending Title 23, chapter 19, subchapters I and III of the Virgin Islands Code relating to benefits and insurance coverage for officers and members of the National Guard of the Virgin Islands to provide for pay comparable to those serving in the armed forces of the United States and to ensure that the territorial active-duty members have insurance to cover any illness or injury sustained while on active duty not covered by other health insurance coverage.
- Bill No. 33-0106 An Act amending Title 6 of the Virgin Islands Code by adding a new chapter 11 prohibiting various uses of unmanned aircraft, also known as drones.

The following was held in committee at the call of the chair:

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