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Nominations of Celestino White Sr. and Judge Denise Francois Move Forward

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Celestino White during a ceremony naming a senior citizen facility after him in October, 2019 By. VI LEGISLATURE

The Senate Committee on Rules and Judiciary, chaired by Sen. Janelle Sarauw, voted favorably Thursday for two of Governor Albert Bryan's nominations, and several bills that will be forwarded to the full Senate for the final vetting.

Celestino White, Sr. is nominated to serve as a member of the Virgin Islands Port Authority Governing Board; Judge Denise Francois is nominated as an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands.

Ms. Francois has an extensive educational background and has served as a Judge in the Virgin Islands for the past six years. She promised to execute her cases fairly, impartially, and with sound judgment.

“As a Judge, my conduct both on and off the bench, both in public and private is governed by the Virgin Islands Model Code of Judicial Conduct. In keeping the Model Code, I always aspire to conduct myself in a manner that ensures good conduct so that the public can have confidence in my competence,” said Ms. Francois.

Mr. White told Committee members that his 42 years of public service experience will be valuable in drafting policies for the Virgin Islands Port Authority Board.

Enforcing deadlines for completion of capital projects at Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas, the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix, and marine infrastructure projects throughout the Virgin Islands will be among his priorities, Mr. White said.

Sen. Sarauw said the airport projects are critical. “The current state of the airports and seaports need improvements. My major concerns are that the contracts are negotiated in good faith and the timely completion per project,” she said.

The Committee also approved:

- Bill No. 33-0097- An act posthumously honoring and commending Euclyn “Pede” Prentice, Jr., for his accomplishments in the horse racing industry and his contributions to the Virgin Islands and naming a road in his honor.
- Bill No. 33-0224- An Act amending Title 14, chapter 23, section 485(f) of the Virgin Islands Code by increasing the fines for selling or serving alcoholic beverages to minors.
- Bill No. 33-0197- An Act amending Title 33, subtitle 1, part II, chapter 20, section 681 of the Virgin Islands Code by authorizing the Virgin Islands Bureau of Internal Revenue to create any and all forms necessary for the collection and filing of taxes.
- Bill No. 33-0093- An Act amending Title 33, chapter 111 of the Virgin Islands Code by adding a new section 3057a, establishing the St.Thomas Capital Improvement Fund.

These measures were removed at the call of the Chair:

- Bill No. 33-0054- An Act amending Title 11 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 23 pertaining to Small Business Development.
- Bill No. 33-0216- An Act amending Title 3, chapters 27 and 28A of the Virgin Islands Code by providing for the forfeiture of retirement benefits of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Commissioners, members of the Legislature, Justices of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands, Judges and Magistrate Judges of the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands elected officials who are members of the Government Employees Retirement System, and all government employees, upon the final conviction of specified felonies.