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Magistrate Judge Ernest Morris Jr.'s Term Nears End: Public Input Sought

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Magistrate Judge Earnest Morris, Jr.

A notice from Debra S. Watlington, the presiding judge of the Virgin Islands Superior Court, has informed that the current term of Superior Court magistrate Ernest E. Morris Jr. is set to expire on November 10.

As per the legal requirements under 4 V.I.C. § 122(a), the court is obligated to seek input from the public concerning the reappointment of a magistrate judge. In compliance with these obligations, Judge Watlington's announcement serves as a 60-day notice of the term's expiration, along with the announcement of the start of the required 30-day comment period.

During the next thirty days, members of the Virgin Islands Bar Association, along with the wider public, are invited to submit written comments concerning the reappointment of Magistrate Morris. Submissions must be addressed to the attention of Presiding Judge Watlington, and sent no later than September 9, either to the R. H. Amphlett Leader Justice Complex at 9000 Estate Kingshill, Kingshill, Virgin Islands 00850-9655 or via email at pcappointments@vicourts.org.

In the Virgin Islands, magistrates are tasked with a broad range of responsibilities, including administering oaths, issuing warrants and subpoenas, conducting marriages, overseeing various non-felony and misdemeanor cases, handling small claims, probate and civil matters not exceeding \$75,000, issuing restraining orders, and hearing landlord and tenant actions.

A Superior Court judge may also designate magistrate judges to hear pretrial matters, conduct hearings, submit findings of fact, and propose recommendations for the disposition of cases.

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