



GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE V. I. INSPECTOR GENERAL

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August 16, 2017

Novelle E. Francis, Jr.
Senator
Committee on Rules and Judiciary
32nd Legislature
#100 Lagoon Street Complex, Suite #2
Frederiksted, St. Croix, V. I. 00840

Via: email

Dear Senator Francis, Jr.:

Thank you for the invitation to attend the Committee on Rule and Judiciary meeting of September 1, 2017, to testify on Bill 32-0003 regarding the creation of the Virgin Islands Commission on Ethics and Conflicts of Interest. Unfortunately, due to a prior commitment, I will not be able to attend the meeting, as I will be out of the territory.

After reviewing the proposed legislation, however, I offer the following comments:

- We have no position one way or another on the abolishment of the ethics and conflicts of interest office within the Department of Justice, and the creation of a separate and independent commission. I think the V. I. Attorney General would be in a better position to discuss the effectiveness of the current structure.
- We do feel that there is a need for a Code of Ethics and Conduct for all Government employees in all of the branches of the Government. The only Code of Ethics that we are aware of is the 1961 Executive Order issued by Governor Paiewonsky.
- We did not find anywhere in the proposed legislation, as one of the responsibilities, the creation of a Code of Ethics. If created, consideration should be given to making this one of the first tasks of the Commission. The 1961 Executive Order can be the basis for the development of a new and updated Code of Ethics, as well as, samples from other jurisdictions.
- We are also concerned with the compensation provision of \$250 a day for members of the Commission. Does the current language leave the "door open" for abuse. Can a Commission member report to the office to do some menial task for a few minutes a day, four days a week and be entitled to collect \$1,000 a week? There should be some type of limit or explanation on what type of work qualifies for the \$250 daily compensation.

Again please accept my apology for not being able to attend the Committee meeting.

Regards,

Steven van Beverhoudt, CFE, CGFM
V. I. Inspector General