

**REVISED ORGANIC ACT  
1954**

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## REVISED ORGANIC ACT OF 1954

(Act of Congress, July 22, 1954, Ch. 558, 68 Stat. 497)

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**Title of Act.** The title to the above-cited Act July 22, 1954, ch. 558, 68 Stat. 497, set out below, reads as follows: "AN ACT To revise the Organic Act of the Virgin Islands of the United States.".

**§ 1. {Short Title}**

... That this Act may be cited as the "Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands".

**§ 2. {Geographical Scope of Act; Definition of "Virgin Islands"; territorial designation; powers and legal status of Government; capital and seat of government}**

(a) The provisions of this Act, and the name "Virgin Islands" as used in this Act, shall apply to and include the territorial domain, islands, cays, and waters acquired by the United States through cession of the Danish West Indian Islands by the convention between the United States of America and His Majesty the King of Denmark entered into August 4, 1916, and ratified by the Senate on September 7, 1916 (39 Stat. 1706). The Virgin Islands as above described are hereby declared an unincorporated territory of the United States of America.

(b) The Government of the Virgin Islands shall have the powers set forth in this Act and shall have the right to sue by such name and in cases arising out of contract, to be sued; *Provided*, That no tort action shall be brought against the government of the Virgin Islands or against any officer or employee thereof in his official capacity without the consent of the legislature constituted by this Act.

The capital and seat of government of the Virgin Islands shall be located at the city of Charlotte Amalie, in the island of Saint Thomas. \* \* \*

**BILL OF RIGHTS****§ 3. {Rights and prohibitions}**

No law shall be enacted in the Virgin Islands which shall deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law or deny to any person therein equal protection of the laws.

In all criminal prosecutions the accused shall enjoy the right to be represented by counsel for his defense, to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation, to have a copy thereof, to have a speedy and public trial, to be confronted with the witnesses against him, and to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor.

No person shall be held to answer for a criminal offense without due process of law, and no person for the same offense shall be twice put in jeopardy of punishment, nor shall be compelled in any criminal cause to give evidence against himself; nor shall any person sit as judge or magistrate in any case in which he has been engaged as attorney or prosecutor.

All persons shall be bailable by sufficient sureties in the case of criminal offenses, except for first-degree murder or any capital offense when the proof is evident or the presumption great.

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted.

No law impairing the obligation of contracts shall be enacted.

No person shall be imprisoned or shall suffer forced labor for debt.

All persons shall have the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus and the same shall not be suspended except as herein expressly provided.

No ex post facto law or bill of attainder shall be enacted.

Private property shall not be taken for public use except upon payment of just compensation ascertained in the manner provided by law.

The right to be secure against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated.

No warrant for arrest or search shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized.

Slavery shall not exist in the Virgin Islands.

Involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted by a court of law, shall not exist in the Virgin Islands.

No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech or of the press or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for the redress of grievances.

No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

No person who advocates, or who aids or belongs to any party, organization, or association which advocates, the overthrow by force or violence of the government of the Virgin Islands or of the United States shall be qualified to hold any office of trust or profit under the government of the Virgin Islands.

No money shall be paid out of the Virgin Islands treasury except in accordance with an Act of Congress or money bill of the legislature and on warrant drawn by the proper officer.

The contracting of polygamous or plural marriages is prohibited.

The employment of children under the age of sixteen years in any occupation injurious to health or morals or hazardous to life or limb is prohibited.

Nothing contained in this Act shall be construed to limit the power of the legislature herein provided to enact laws for the protection of life, the public health, or the public safety. \* \* \*

## FRANCHISE

### § 4. {Voting franchise; discrimination prohibited}

The franchise shall be vested in residents of the Virgin Islands who are citizens of the United States, twenty-one years of age or over. Additional qualifications may be prescribed by the legislature: *Provided, however,* That no property, language, or income qualification shall ever be imposed upon or required of any voter, nor shall any discrimination in qualification be made or based upon difference in race, color, sex, or religious belief. \* \* \*

## LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

### § 5. {Legislature—Designation and unicameral character}

(a) The legislative power and authority of the Virgin Islands shall be vested in a legislature, consisting of one house, to be designated the "Legislature of the Virgin Islands", herein referred to as the legislature.

#### {Composition; legislative districts; method of elections}

(b) The legislature shall be composed of eleven members to be known as senators. The Virgin Islands shall be divided into three legislative districts, as follows: The District of Saint Thomas, comprising Saint Thomas, Hassel, Water, Savana, Inner Brass, Outer Brass, Hans Lollik, Little Hans Lollik, Great Saint James, Little Saint James, and Capella Islands, Thatch Cay and adjacent islets and cays; the District of Saint Croix, comprising Saint Croix and Buck Islands and adjacent islets and cays; and the District of Saint John, comprising Saint John and Flanagan Islands, Grass, Mingo, Lovango, and Congo cays and adjacent islets and cays. Two senators shall be elected by the qualified electors of the District of Saint Thomas; two senators shall be elected by the qualified electors of the District of Saint Croix; and one senator shall be elected by the qualified electors of the District of Saint John. The other six senators shall be senators at large and shall be elected by the qualified electors of the Virgin Islands from the Virgin Islands as a whole: *Provided,* That in the election of senators at large, each elector shall be entitled to vote for two candidates, and the candidates receiving the largest number of votes shall be declared elected up to the number to be

elected at that election. The order of names upon the ballot for each office shall be determined by lot among the candidates: *Provided*, That the Government Secretary or his designee is authorized to draw for a candidate who does not appear in person, or by authorized representative, at the drawing of lots. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

#### **§ 6. {Same—Terms of office}**

(a) The term of office of each member of the legislature shall be two years. The term of office of each member shall commence on the second Monday in April following his election: *Provided, however*, That the term of office of each member elected in November 1954 shall commence on the second Monday in January 1955 and shall continue until the second Monday in April 1957.

#### **{Qualifications of members}**

(b) No person shall be eligible to be a member of the legislature who is not a citizen of the United States, who has not attained the age of twenty-five years, who is not a qualified voter in the Virgin Islands, who has not been a bona fide resident of the Virgin Islands for at least three years next preceding the date of his election, or who has been convicted of a felony or of a crime involving moral turpitude and has not received a pardon restoring his civil rights. Federal employees and persons employed in the legislative, executive or judicial branches of the Government of the Virgin Islands shall not be eligible for membership in the legislature.

#### **{Appointment of electoral officers}**

(c) All officers and employees charged with the duty of directing the administration of the electoral system of the Virgin Islands and its representative districts shall be appointed in such manner as the legislature may by law direct.

#### **{Immunity of members}**

(d) No member of the legislature shall be held to answer before any tribunal other than the legislature for any speech or debate in the legislature and the members shall in all cases, except treason, felony, or breach of the peace, be privileged from arrest during their attendance at the sessions of the legislature and in going to and returning from the same.

#### **{Compensation and allowances}**

(e) Each member of the legislature shall be paid the sum of \$600 annually, one-third on the second Monday in April, one-third on the second Monday in May, and one-third at the close of the regular session: *Provided, however*, That each member of the



legislature shall be paid for the regular session commencing on the second Monday in January 1955, the sum of \$600 annually, one-third on the second Monday in January, one-third on the second Monday in February, and one-third at the close of that session. Each member of the legislature who is away from the island of his residence shall also receive the sum of \$10 per day for each day's attendance while the legislature is actually in session, in lieu of his expenses for subsistence, and shall be reimbursed for his actual travel expenses in going to and returning from each session, or period thereof, not to exceed a total of eight round trips during any calendar year. The salaries, per diem, and travel allowances of the members of the legislature shall be paid by the Government of the United States.

**{Limitations on holding other office}**

(f) No member of the legislature shall hold or be appointed to any office which has been created by the legislature, or the salary or emoluments of which have been increased, while he was a member, during the term for which he was elected, or during one year after the expiration of such term.

**{General powers; parliamentary rules}**

(g) The legislature shall be the sole judge of the elections and qualifications of its members, shall have and exercise all the authority and attributes, inherent in legislative assemblies, and shall have the power to institute and conduct investigations, issue subpena [sic.] to witnesses and other parties concerned, and administer oaths. The rules of the Legislative Assembly of the Virgin Islands existing on the date of approval of this Act shall continue in force and effect for sessions of the legislature, except as inconsistent with this Act, until altered, amended, or repealed by the legislature.

**{Vacancies}**

(h) The Governor of the Virgin Islands shall fill any vacancy in the office of a member of the legislature by appointment. If the vacant office is that of a senator from a district, the person appointed shall be a resident of the district from which the member whose office is vacant was elected. If the vacant office is that of a senator at large the person appointed may be a resident of any part of the Virgin Islands. In any case, the person appointed shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

**§ 7. {Time, frequency, and duration of regular sessions; place of holding}**

(a) Regular sessions of the legislature shall be held annually, commencing on the second Monday in April, and shall continue in regular session for not more than sixty consecutive calendar days in any calendar year: *Provided, however,* That the

annual session for 1955 shall commence on the second Monday in January 1955, and shall continue in regular session for not more than sixty consecutive calendar days. The Governor may call special sessions of the legislature at any time when in his opinion the public interests may require it, but no special session shall continue longer than fifteen calendar days, and the aggregate of such special sessions during any calendar year shall not exceed thirty calendar days. No legislation shall be considered at any special session other than that specified in the call therefor or in any special message by the Governor to the legislature while in such session.

(b) Sessions of the legislature shall be held in the capital of the Virgin Islands at Charlotte Amalie, Saint Thomas. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

**§ 8. {Legislative powers and activities—Scope of authority; limitation on enactments and taxation.}**

(a) The legislative authority and power of the Virgin Islands shall extend to all subjects of local application not inconsistent with this Act or the laws of the United States made applicable to the Virgin Islands, but no law shall be enacted which would impair rights existing or arising by virtue of any treaty or international agreement entered into by the United States, nor shall the lands or other property of nonresidents be taxed at a higher rate than the lands or other property of residents.

**{Government bonds; maximum amount; sale, interest, etc.}**

(b) The legislature of the government of the Virgin Islands may cause to be issued on behalf of said government bonds or other obligations for a specific public improvement or specific public undertaking authorized by an act of the legislature, which bonds or obligations shall be payable solely from the revenues directly derived from and attributable to such specific public improvement or public undertaking. The total amount of such revenue bonds which may be issued and outstanding from all such improvements or undertakings at any one time shall not be in excess of \$10,000,000. Bonds issued pursuant to this subsection may bear such date or dates, may be in such denominations, may mature in such amounts and at such time or times, not exceeding thirty years from the date thereof, may be payable at such place or places, may carry such registration privileges as to either principal and interest, or principal only, and may be executed by such officers and in such manner as shall be prescribed by the government of the Virgin Islands. Said bonds shall be sold at public sale and shall be redeemable after five years without premium. In case any of the officers whose signatures appear on the bonds or coupons shall cease to be such officers before delivery of such bonds, such signature, whether manual or facsimile shall, nevertheless, be valid and sufficient for all purposes, the same as if such officers had remained in office until such delivery. The bonds so issued shall bear interest at a rate not to exceed 5 per centum per annum, payable semiannually. All such bonds shall be sold for not less than the principal amount thereof plus accrued interest. All

such bonds issued by the government of the Virgin Islands or by its authority shall be exempt as to principal and interest from taxation by the Government of the United States, or by the government of the Virgin Islands, or by any States, Territory, or possession or by any political subdivision of any State, Territory or possession, or by the District of Columbia. Such bonds shall under no circumstances constitute a general obligation of the Virgin Islands or of the United State. The legislature shall have no power to incur any indebtedness which may be a general obligation of said government.

**{Applicability of laws and ordinances; amendment repeal}**

(c) The laws of the United States applicable to the Virgin Islands on the date of approval of this Act, including laws made applicable to the Virgin Islands by or pursuant to the provisions of the Act of June 22, 1936 (49 Stat. 1807), and all local laws and ordinances in force in the Virgin Islands, or any part thereof, on the date of approval of this Act shall, to the extent they are not inconsistent with this Act, continue in force and effect until otherwise provided by the Congress: *Provided*, That the legislature shall have power, within its jurisdiction and not inconsistent with the other provisions of this Act, to amend, alter, modify, or repeal any local law or ordinance, public or private, civil or criminal, continued in force and effect by this Act, except as herein otherwise provided, and to enact new laws not inconsistent with any law of the United States applicable to the Virgin Islands, subject to the power of Congress to annul any such Act of the legislature.

**{Commission to survey field of Federal statutes; recommendations to Congress; compensation and allowances}**

(d) The President of the United States shall appoint a commission of seven persons, at least three of whom shall be residents of the Virgin Islands, to survey the field of Federal statutes and to make recommendations to the Congress within twelve months after the date of approval of this Act as to which statutes of the United States not applicable to the Virgin Islands on such date should be made applicable to the Virgin Islands, and as to which statutes of the United States applicable to the Virgin Islands on such date should be declared inapplicable. The members of the commission shall receive no salary for their service on the commission, but under regulations and in amounts prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior, they may be paid, out of Federal funds, reasonable per diem fees, and allowances in lieu of subsistence expenses, for attendance at meetings of the commission, and for time spent on official business of the commission, and their necessary travel expenses to and from meetings or when upon such official business, without regard to the Travel Expense Act of 1949.

**{Code of laws}**

(e) The Secretary of the Interior shall arrange for the preparation, at Federal expense, of a code of laws of the Virgin Islands, to be entitled the "Virgin Islands Code", which shall be a consolidation, codification and revision of the local laws and ordinances in force in the Virgin Islands. When prepared, the Governor shall submit it, together with his recommendations, to the legislature for enactment. Upon the enactment of the Virgin Islands Code it and any supplements to it shall be printed, at Federal expense, by the Government Printing Office as a public document. \* \* \*

**§ 9. {Legislative procedure - Quorum and method of voting on bills}**

(a) The quorum of the legislature shall consist of seven of its members. No bill shall become a law unless it shall have been passed at a meeting, at which a quorum was present, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present and voting, which vote shall be by yeas and nays.

**{Enacting clause of acts}**

(b) The enacting clause of all acts shall be as follows: "Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands".

**{Governor's message and budget}**

(c) The Governor shall submit at the opening of each regular session of the legislature a message on the state of the Virgin Islands and a budget of estimated receipts and expenditures, which shall be the basis of the appropriation bills for the ensuing fiscal year, which shall commence on the first day of July.

**{Approval and disapproval of bills}**

(d) Every bill passed by the legislature shall, before it becomes a law, be presented to the Governor. If the Governor approves the bill, he shall sign it. If the Governor disapproves the bill, he shall, except as hereinafter provided, return it, with his objections, to the legislature within ten days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him. If the Governor does not return the bill within such period, it shall be a law in like manner as if he had signed it, unless the legislature by adjournment prevents its return, in which case it shall be a law if signed by the Governor within thirty days after it shall have been presented to him; otherwise it shall not be a law. When a bill is returned by the Governor to the legislature with his objections, the legislature shall enter his objections at large on its journal and proceed to reconsider the bill. If, after such reconsideration, two-thirds of all the members of the legislature agree to pass the bill, it shall be presented anew to the Governor. If he then approves it, he shall sign it; if not, he shall within ten days after it has been presented to him transmit it to the President of the United States. If the President approves the bill, he shall sign it. If he disapproves the bill, he shall return it to the Governor, so

stating, and it shall not be a law. If the President neither approves nor disapproves the bill within ninety days from the date on which it is transmitted to him by the Governor, the bill shall be a law in like manner as if the President had signed it. If any bill presented to the Governor contains several items of appropriations of money, he may object to one or more of such items, or any part or parts, portion or portions thereof, while approving the other items, parts, or portions of the bill. In such a case he shall append to the bill, at the time of signing it, a statement of the items, or parts or portions thereof, to which he objects, and the items, or parts or portions thereof, so objected to shall not take effect.

**{Use of prior appropriations upon failure to pass appropriation bills}**

(e) If at the termination of any fiscal year the legislature shall have failed to pass appropriation bills providing for payment of the obligations and necessary current expenses of the government of the Virgin Islands for the ensuing fiscal year, then the several sums appropriated in the last appropriation bills for the objects and purposes therein specified, so far as the same may be applicable, shall be deemed to be reappropriated item by item.

**{Journal of proceedings; contents}**

(f) The legislature shall keep a journal of its proceedings and publish the same. Every bill passed by the legislature and the yeas and nays on any question shall be entered on the journal.

**{Transmittal of laws to Secretary of Interior and Congress}**

(g) Copies of all laws enacted by the legislature shall be transmitted within fifteen days of their enactment by the Governor to the Secretary of the Interior and by him annually to the Congress of the United States. \* \* \*

**§ 10. {General elections; time; transfer of Council functions, property, etc.}**

The next general election in the Virgin Islands shall be held on November 2, 1954. At such time there shall be chosen the entire membership of the legislature as herein provided. Thereafter the general elections shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, beginning with the year 1956, and every two years thereafter. The Municipal Council of Saint Thomas and Saint John, and the Municipal Council of Saint Croix, existing on the date of approval of this Act, shall continue to function until January 10, 1955, at which time all of the functions, property, personnel, records, and unexpended balances of appropriations and funds of the governments of the municipality of Saint Thomas and Saint John and the municipality of Saint Croix shall be transferred to the government of the Virgin Islands. \* \* \*

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**EXECUTIVE BRANCH****§ 11. {Governor; appointment; powers and duties generally}**

The executive power of the Virgin Islands shall be vested in an executive officer whose title shall be the "Governor of the Virgin Islands", and shall be exercised under the supervision of the Secretary of the Interior. The Governor of the Virgin Islands shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, and shall hold office at the pleasure of the President and until his successor is chosen and qualified. The Governor shall maintain his official residence in the Government House on Saint Thomas during his official incumbency, free of rent, and while in Saint Croix may reside in Government House on Saint Croix free of rent. He shall have general supervision and control of all the departments, bureaus, agencies, and other instrumentalities of the executive branch of the government of the Virgin Islands. He may grant pardons and reprieves and remit fines and forfeitures for offenses against the local laws, and may grant respites for all offenses against the laws of the United States applicable in the Virgin Islands until the decision of the President can be ascertained. He may veto any legislation as provided in this Act. He shall appoint all officers and employees of the executive branch of the government of the Virgin Islands, except as otherwise provided in this or any other Act of Congress, and shall commission all officers that he may be authorized to appoint. He shall be responsible for the faithful execution of the laws of the Virgin Islands and the laws of the United States applicable in the Virgin Islands. Whenever it becomes necessary he may call upon the commanders of the military and naval forces of the United States in the islands, or summon the posse comitatus, or call out the militia, to prevent or suppress violence, invasion, insurrection, or rebellion; and he may, in case of rebellion or invasion, or imminent danger thereof, when the public safety requires it, suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, or place the islands, or any part thereof, under martial law, until communication can be had with the President and the President's decision thereon made known. He shall annually, and at such other times as the President or the Congress may require, make official report of the transactions of the government of the Virgin Islands to the Secretary of the Interior, and his said annual report shall be transmitted to the Congress. He shall perform such additional duties and functions as may, in pursuance of law, be delegated to him by the President, or by the Secretary of the Interior. He shall have the power to issue executive regulations not in conflict with any applicable law. He may attend or may designate another person to represent him at the meetings of the legislature, and give expressions to his views on any matter before that body, and may recommend bills to the legislature. \*\*\*



**§ 12. {Government Secretary; appointment; custody of seal; powers and duties}**

The President shall appoint a Government Secretary for the Virgin Islands. He shall have custody of the seal of the Virgin Islands and shall countersign and affix such seal to all executive proclamations and all other executive documents. He shall record and preserve the laws enacted by the legislature. He shall promulgate all proclamations and orders of the Governor and all laws enacted by the legislature. He shall have such executive powers and perform such other duties as may be assigned to him by the Governor. \* \* \*

**§ 13. {Administrative assistants; residence; duties; preference in appointment}**

The Governor may appoint an administrative assistant who shall reside in Saint Croix and an administrative assistant who shall reside in Saint John. These administrative assistants shall perform such duties as may be assigned to them by the Governor. In making such appointments, preference shall be given to qualified residents of the Virgin Islands. \* \* \*

**§ 14. {Vacancy in office, or absence, of Governor; powers of Government Secretary}**

In case of a vacancy in the office of Governor or the disability or temporary absence of the Governor, the Government Secretary shall have all the powers of the Governor. \* \* \*

**§ 15. {Vacancy in offices, or absence, of Governor and Government Secretary; designation of department head to act}**

The Secretary of the Interior may from time to time designate the head of an executive department of the government of the Virgin Islands to act as Governor in the case of vacancy in the offices, or the disability or temporary absence, of both the Governor and the Government Secretary, and the person so designated shall have all the powers of the Governor for so long as such condition continues. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

**§ 16. {Reorganization of government—Consolidation of departments, bureaus, etc.; limitation on creation of new departments}**

(a) The Governor shall, within one year after the date of approval of this Act, reorganize and consolidate the existing executive departments, bureaus, independent boards, agencies, authorities, commissions, and other instrumentalities of the government of the Virgin Islands or of the municipal governments into not more than

nine executive departments except for independent bodies whose existence may be required by Federal law for participation in Federal programs. The head of each executive department shall be designated as the Commissioner thereof, and the Commissioner of Finance shall be bonded. No other department, bureau, independent board, agency, authority, commission, or other instrumentality shall be created, organized, or established by the Governor or the legislature, without the prior approval of the Secretary of the Interior, unless required by Federal law for participation in Federal programs.

**{Changes after examination from time to time}**

(b) The Governor shall, from time to time, after complying with the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, examine the organization of the executive branch of the government of the Virgin Islands, and shall make such changes therein, subject to the approval of the legislature, not inconsistent with this Act, as he determines are necessary to promote effective management and to execute faithfully the purposes of this Act and the laws of the Virgin Islands.

**{Appointment of department heads; tenure; removal; powers and duties}**

(c) The heads of the executive departments created by this Act shall be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the legislature. Each shall hold office during the continuance in office of the Governor by whom he is appointed and until his successor is appointed and qualified, unless sooner removed by the Governor. Each shall have such powers and duties as may be prescribed by the legislature. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

**§ 17. {Government Comptroller—Appointment, compensation, tenure, and removal; reappointment.**

(a) The Secretary of the Interior shall appoint a government comptroller who shall receive a salary of not to exceed \$12,500 per annum. The government comptroller shall hold office for a term of ten years and until his successor is appointed and qualified unless sooner removed by the Secretary of the Interior for cause. The government comptroller shall not be eligible for reappointment.

**{Audit and settlement of accounts, claims, funds, and expenditures}**

(b) The government comptroller shall audit and settle all accounts and claims pertaining to the revenues and receipts from whatever source of the government of the Virgin Islands and of funds derived from bond issues; and he shall audit and settle, in accordance with law and administrative regulations, all expenditures of funds and property pertaining to the government of the Virgin Islands including those pertaining to trust funds held by the government of the Virgin Islands.



**{Duty to report uncollectible accounts and questionable expenditures}**

(c) It shall be the duty of the government comptroller to bring to the attention of the proper administrative officer failures to collect amounts due the government, and expenditures of funds or property which in his opinion are extravagant, excessive, unnecessary, or irregular.

**{Certification of net amount of revenues}**

(d) It shall be the duty of the government comptroller to certify to the Secretary of the Interior the net amount of government revenues which form the basis for Federal grants for the civil government of the Virgin Islands.

**{Finality of decisions; appeal to Governor}**

(e) The decisions of the government comptroller shall be final except that appeal therefrom may be taken by the party aggrieved or the head of the department concerned within one year from the date of the decision, to the Governor, which appeal shall be in writing and shall specifically set forth the particular action of the government comptroller to which exception is taken with the reasons and the authorities relied upon for reversing such decision.

**{Other remedies for aggrieved party confirmation of decision by Governor}**

(f) If the Governor confirms the decision of the government comptroller, then relief may be sought by appeal to the legislature or suit in the District Court of the Virgin Islands if the claim is otherwise within its jurisdiction.

**{Direct communication with claimant or departmental personnel; witnesses; oaths}**

(g) The government comptroller is authorized to communicate directly with any person having claims before him for settlement, or with any department officer or person having official relation with his office. He may summon witnesses and administer oaths.

**{Annual fiscal reports to Governor}**

(h) As soon after the close of each fiscal year as the accounts of said fiscal year may be examined and adjusted, the government comptroller shall submit to the Governor of the Virgin Islands an annual report of the fiscal condition of the government, showing the receipts and disbursements of the various departments and agencies of the government.

**{Other reports}**

(i) The government comptroller shall make such other reports as may be required by the Governor of the Virgin Islands, the Comptroller General of the United States, or the Secretary of the Interior.

**{Supervision by Secretary of Interior; status of office}**

(j) The office of the government comptroller shall be under the general supervision of the Secretary of the Interior, but shall not be a part of any executive department in the government of the Virgin Islands. \* \* \*

**SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTS****§ 18. {Establishment and maintenance of system of accounts; scope}**

The Governor shall establish and maintain systems of accounting and internal control designed to provide—

- (a) full disclosure of the financial results of the government's activities;
- (b) adequate financial information needed for the government's management purposes;
- (c) effective control over and accountability for all funds, property, and other assets for which the government is responsible, including appropriate internal audit; and
- (d) reliable accounting results to serve as the basis for preparation and support of the government's request for the approval of the President or his designated representative for the obligation and expenditure of the internal revenue collections as provided in section 26, the Governor's budget request to the legislature, and for controlling the execution of the said budget. \* \* \*

**§ 19. {Review of office and activities of Government Comptroller; report}**

The office and activities of the Government Comptroller of the Virgin Islands shall be subject to review annually by the Comptroller General of the United States, and report thereon shall be made by him to the Governor, the Secretary of the Interior, and to the Congress. \* \* \*

**§ 20. {Compensation of Governor, Government Secretary, and staffs, and of department heads; method of payment of official salaries; failure to appropriate}**

- (a) The Governor shall receive an annual salary at the rate provided for Governors of Territories and possessions in the Executive Pay Act of 1949.
- (b) The Government Secretary, the heads of the executive departments, and the members of the immediate staffs of the Governor and the Government Secretary, shall receive annual salaries at rates established by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with the standards provided in the Classification Act of 1949.
- (c) The salaries of the Governor, the Government Secretary, and the members of their immediate staffs shall be paid by the United States. The salaries of the government comptroller and the heads of the executive departments shall be paid by the government of the Virgin Islands; and if the legislature shall fail to make an appropriation for such salaries, the salaries theretofore fixed shall be paid without the necessity of further appropriations therefor. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

**JUDICIAL BRANCH**

**§ 21. {District Court of the Virgin Islands, and inferior courts}**

The judicial power of the Virgin Islands shall be vested in a court of record to be designated the "District Court of the Virgin Islands", and in such court or courts of inferior jurisdiction as may have been or may hereafter be established by local law. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

**§ 22. {Jurisdiction of District Court; transfer of actions}**

The District Court of the Virgin Islands shall have the jurisdiction of a district court of the United States in all causes arising under the Constitution, treaties and laws of the United States, regardless of the sum or value of the matter in controversy. It shall have general original jurisdiction in all other causes in the Virgin Islands, exclusive jurisdiction over which is not conferred by this Act upon the inferior courts of the Virgin Islands. When it is in the interest of justice to do so the district court may on motion of any party transfer to the district court any action or proceeding brought in an inferior court and the district court shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine such action or proceeding. The district court shall also have appellate jurisdiction to review the judgments and orders of the inferior courts of the Virgin Islands to the extent now or hereafter prescribed by local law. \* \* \*

**§ 23. {Jurisdiction of inferior courts; transfer of actions; status as committing court; bail; rules}**

The inferior courts now or hereafter established by local law shall have exclusive original jurisdiction of all civil actions wherein the matter in controversy does not exceed the sum or value of \$500, exclusive of interest and costs, all criminal cases wherein the maximum punishment which may be imposed does not exceed a fine of \$100 or imprisonment for six months, or both, and all violations of police and executive regulations, and they shall have original jurisdiction, concurrently with the district court, of all actions, civil or criminal, jurisdiction of which may hereafter be conferred upon them by local law. Any action or proceeding brought in the district court which is within the jurisdiction of an inferior court may be transferred to such inferior court by the district court in the interest of justice. The inferior court shall hold preliminary investigations in charges of felony and charges of misdemeanor in which the punishment that may be imposed is beyond the jurisdiction granted to the inferior courts by this section, and shall commit offenders to the district court and grant bail in bailable cases. The rules governing the practice and procedure of the inferior courts and prescribing the duties of the judges and officers thereof, oaths and bonds, the times and places of holding court, and the procedure for appeals to the district court shall be as may hereafter be established by the district court. The rules governing disposition of fines, costs and forfeitures, enforcement of judgments, and disposition and treatment of prisoners shall be as established by law or ordinance in force on the date of approval of this Act or as may hereafter be so established. \* \* \*

**§ 24. {Judge of District Court; tenure; removal; compensation; assignment of other judges; marshal and deputy}**

The President shall, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoint a judge for the District Court of the Virgin Islands, who shall hold office for the term of eight years and until his successor is chosen and qualified, unless sooner removed by the President for cause. The salary of the judge of the district court shall be at the rate prescribed for judges of the United States district courts. Whenever it is made to appear that such an assignment is necessary for the proper dispatch of the business of the District Court the Chief Judge of the Third Judicial Circuit of the United States may assign a circuit or district judge of the Third Circuit, or the Chief Justice of the United States may assign any other United States circuit or district judge with the consent of the judge so assigned and of the chief judge of his circuit, to serve temporarily as a judge of the District Court of the Virgin Islands. The compensation of the judge of the district court and the administrative expenses of the court shall be paid from appropriations made for the judiciary of the United States. The Attorney General shall, as heretofore, appoint a marshal and one deputy marshal for the Virgin Islands to whose office the provisions of chapter 33 of title 28, United States Code, shall apply. \* \* \*

**§ 25. {Judicial divisions; sessions, applicability of procedural rules; prosecution by information or indictment}**

The Virgin Islands consists of two judicial divisions; the Division of Saint Croix, comprising the island of Saint Croix and adjacent islands and cays and the Division of Saint Thomas and Saint John, comprising the islands of Saint Thomas and Saint John and adjacent islands and cays. The district court shall hold sessions in each division at such time as the court may designate by rule or order, at least once in three months in each division. The rules of practice and procedure heretofore or hereafter promulgated and made effective by the Supreme Court of the United States pursuant to section 2072 of title 28, United States Code, in civil cases, section 2073 of title 28, United States Code, in admiralty cases, and section 30 of the Bankruptcy Act in bankruptcy cases, shall apply to the District Court of the Virgin Islands and to appeals therefrom. All offenses shall continue to be prosecuted in the District Court by information as heretofore except such as may be required by local law to be prosecuted by indictment by grand jury. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

**§ 26. {Trial by jury}**

In any criminal case originating in the district court, no person shall be denied the right to trial by jury on the demand of either party. If no jury is demanded the case shall be tried by the judge of the district court without a jury, except that the judge may, on his own motion, order a jury for the trial of any criminal action. The legislature may provide for trial in misdemeanor cases by a jury of six qualified persons. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

**§ 27. {United States attorney, and assistant; tenure; removal; duties; vacancies; clerical assistants; compensation}**

The President shall, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoint a United States attorney for the Virgin Islands, who shall hold office for the term of four years and until his successor is chosen and qualified, unless sooner removed by the President for cause. The United States attorney, by himself or the assistant United States attorney, shall conduct all legal proceedings, civil and criminal, to which the Government of the United States or the Government of the Virgin Islands is a party in the District Court of the Virgin Islands and in the inferior courts of the Virgin Islands. Offenses against the laws of the Virgin Islands shall be prosecuted in the name of the government of the Virgin Islands. The United States attorney shall perform his duties under the supervision and direction of the Attorney General of the United States. The Attorney General may appoint one assistant United States attorney. The Attorney General may authorize the employment of necessary clerical assistants. The compensation of the district attorney and his assistant and employees shall be fixed by the Attorney General and their salaries and the other necessary expenses of the office shall be paid from appropriations made to the Department of Justice. In the case of a

vacancy in the office of the district attorney, the District Court of the Virgin Islands may appoint a district attorney to serve until the vacancy is filled. The order of appointment by the court shall be filed with the clerk of the court.—July 22, 1954, ch. 558, § 27, 68 Stat. 507.

### FISCAL PROVISIONS

#### § 28. {Disposition of revenues—Use of certain proceeds for expenditure; Income tax obligations of inhabitants}

(a) The proceeds of customs duties, the proceeds of the United States income tax, the proceeds of any taxes levied by the Congress on the inhabitants of the Virgin Islands, and the proceeds of all quarantine, passport, immigration, and naturalization fees collected in the Virgin Islands, less the cost of collecting all of said duties, taxes, and fees, shall be covered into the treasury of the Virgin Islands, and shall be available for expenditure as the Legislature of the Virgin Islands may provide: *Provided*, That the term "inhabitants of the Virgin Islands" as used in this section shall include all persons whose permanent residence is in the Virgin Islands, and such persons shall satisfy their income tax obligations under applicable taxing statutes of the United States by paying their tax on income derived from all sources both within and outside the Virgin Islands into the treasury of the Virgin Islands: *Provided further*, That nothing in this Act shall be construed to apply to any tax specified in section 3811 of the Internal Revenue Code.

#### {Amendment of Internal Revenue Code of 1939}

(b) Subchapter B of chapter 28 of the Internal Revenue Code is amended by adding to section 3350 thereof the following subsection:

"(c) DISPOSITION OF INTERNAL REVENUE COLLECTIONS.—Beginning with the fiscal year ending June 30, 1954, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of the Treasury shall determine the amount of all taxes imposed by, and collected during the fiscal year under, the internal revenue laws of the United States on articles produced in the Virgin Islands and transported to the United States. The amount so determined less 1 per centum and less the estimated amount of refunds or credits shall be subject to disposition as follows:

"(i) There shall be transferred and paid over to the government of the Virgin Islands from the amounts so determined a sum equal to the total amount of the revenue collected by the government of the Virgin Islands during the fiscal year, as certified by the Government Comptroller of the Virgin Islands. The moneys so transferred and paid over shall constitute a separate fund in the treasury of the Virgin Islands and may be expended as the legislature may determine; *Provided*, That the approval of the President or his designated representative shall be obtained before such moneys may be obligated or expended.



"(ii) There shall also be transferred and paid over to the government of the Virgin Islands during each of the fiscal years ending June 30, 1955, and June 30, 1956, the sum of \$1,000,000, or the balance of the internal revenue collections available under this subsection (c) after payments are made under the preceding paragraph (i), whichever amount is greater. The moneys so transferred and paid over shall be deposited in the separate fund established by the preceding paragraph (i), but shall be obligated or expended for emergency purposes and essential public projects only, with the prior approval of the President or his designated representative.

"(iii) Any amounts remaining shall be deposited in the Treasury of the United States as miscellaneous receipts.

"If at the end of any fiscal year the total of the Federal contribution made under (i) above at the beginning of that fiscal year has not been obligated or expended for an approved purpose, the balance shall continue available for expenditure during any succeeding fiscal year, but only for approved emergency relief purposes and essential public projects as provided in (ii) above. The aggregate amount of moneys available for expenditure for emergency relief purposes and essential public projects only, including payment under (ii) above, shall not exceed the sum of \$5,000,000 at the end of any fiscal year. Any unobligated or unexpended balance of the Federal contribution remaining at the end of a fiscal year which would cause the moneys available for emergency relief purposes and essential public projects only to exceed the sum of \$5,000,000 shall thereupon be transferred and paid over to the Treasury of the United States as miscellaneous receipts."

**{Import provisions with respect to trade-marks}**

(c) Section 42 of the Trade Mark Act of 1946 (60 Stat. 440, 15 U.S.C., 1952 edition, sec. 1124), and section 526 of the Tariff Act of 1930 (46 Stat. 741, 19 U.S.C., 1952 edition, sec. 1526), shall not apply to importations into the Virgin Islands of genuine foreign merchandise bearing a genuine foreign trade-mark, but shall remain applicable to importations of such merchandise from the Virgin Islands into the United States or its possessions; and the dealing in or possession of any such merchandise in the Virgin Islands shall not constitute a violation of any registrant's right under said Trade Mark Act.

**{Import duties on articles entering United States from Virgin Islands}**

(d) All articles coming into the United States from the Virgin Islands shall be subject to or exempt from duty as provided for in section 301 of the Tariff Act of 1930 and subject to internal-revenue taxes as provided for in section 7652(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. \* \* \*

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## MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

### **§ 29. {United States citizenship requirement of government officials; loyalty statement}**

All officials of the government of the Virgin Islands shall be citizens of the United States. Every member of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands and all officers and employees of the government of the Virgin Islands shall before entering upon the duties of their respective offices, or, in the case of persons in the employ of the government of the Virgin Islands on the effective date of this Act, then within sixty days of the effective date thereof, make a written statement in the following form:

"I, -----, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support, obey, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States applicable to the Virgin Islands and the laws of the Virgin Islands, and that I will discharge the duties of ----- with fidelity.

"And I do further swear (or affirm) that I do not advocate, nor am I knowingly a member of any organization that advocates, the overthrow of the Government of the United States or of the Virgin Islands by force or violence or other unconstitutional means, or seeking by force or violence to deny other persons their rights under the Constitution and laws of the United States applicable to the Virgin Islands or the laws of the Virgin Islands.

"And I do further swear (or affirm) that I will not so advocate nor will I knowingly become a member of such organization during the period that I am an employee of the Virgin Islands." \* \* \*

### **§ 30. {Reports by Governor; jurisdiction of Secretary of Interior; exceptions}**

All reports required by law to be made by the Governor to any official of the United States shall hereafter be made to the Secretary of the Interior, and the President is hereby authorized to place all matters pertaining to the government of the Virgin Islands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior, except matters relating to the judicial branch of said government which on the date of approval of this Act are under the supervision of the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, and the matters relating to the United States Attorney and the United States Marshal which on the date of approval of this Act are under the supervision of the Attorney General. \* \* \*

### **§ 31. {Lease, sale, and control of public property}**

(a) The Secretary of the Interior shall be authorized to lease or to sell upon such terms as he may deem advantageous to the Government of the United States any



property of the United States under his administrative supervision in the Virgin Islands not needed for public purposes.

(b) The government of the Virgin Islands shall continue to have control over all public property that is under its control on the date of approval of this Act. \* \* \*

**§ 32. {Amendment of 1890 Act relating to importation of diseased animals}**

Section 6 of the Act of August 30, 1890 (26 Stat. 414, 416), as amended (21 U.S.C., 1946 edition, sec. 104), is further amended by inserting the words "and the admission into the Virgin Islands" immediately following the word "Texas", so that such section will read as follows:

"The importation of cattle, sheep, and other ruminants, and swine, which are diseased or infected with any disease, or which shall have been exposed to such infection within sixty days next before their exportation, is prohibited: *Provided*, That the Secretary of Agriculture, within his discretion and under such regulations as he may prescribe, is authorized to permit the admission from Mexico into the State of Texas and the admission into the Virgin Islands of cattle which have been infested with or exposed to ticks upon being freed therefrom. Any person who shall knowingly violate the foregoing provision shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and shall, on conviction, be punished by a fine not exceeding \$5,000, or by imprisonment not exceeding three years, and any vessel or vehicle used in such unlawful importation within the knowledge of the master or owner of such vessel or vehicle that such importation is diseased or has been exposed to infection as herein described, shall be forfeited to the United States." \* \* \*

\* \* \*

**§ 33. {Amendment of 1903 Act relating to prevention of introduction and dissemination of contagious diseases of animals, poultry, etc.}**

Section 2 of the Act of February 2, 1903 (32 Stat. 791, 792), as amended (21 U.S.C., 1946 edition, sec. 111), is hereby further amended by striking out the period and adding at the end thereof the following: ": *Provided*, That no such regulations or measures shall pertain to the introduction of live poultry into the Virgin Islands of the United States." \* \* \*

\* \* \*

**§ 34. {Effective date; temporary continuation of functions and of incumbents in offices; preservation of term of office of district court judge in office}**

This Act shall take effect upon its approval, but until its provisions shall severally become operative as herein provided, the corresponding legislative, executive, and judicial functions of the existing government shall continue to be exercised as now provided by law or ordinance, and the incumbents of all offices under the government of the Virgin Islands shall continue in office until their successors are appointed and have qualified unless sooner removed by competent authority. The enactment of this Act shall not affect the term of office of the judge of the District Court of the Virgin Islands in office on the date of its enactment. \* \* \*

**§ 35. {Appropriations}**

There are hereby authorized to be appropriated annually by the Congress of the United States such sums as may be necessary and appropriate to carry out the provisions and purposes of this Act. \* \* \*

**§ 36. {Separability of provisions}**

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, or part of this Act, or the application thereof to any person, or circumstances, is held invalid, the application thereof to other persons, or circumstances, and the remainder of the Act, shall not be affected thereby. \* \* \*