

## Speaker of the House Announces Inaugural Newsletter

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When people stay informed, get involved, and share their views, it helps create a system of governance that is open, responsive, and truly focused on the needs of the community.

As we close this first issue of *House Matters*, we invite you to stay connected. Take part in public discussions, learn about the issues that affect you, and share your thoughts on the laws and policies shaping everyday life in the Virgin Islands.

Your voice is an important part of this journey.



The House of Assembly welcomes your questions, feedback, and participation. Together, we continue to build on our proud democratic tradition and shape a strong future for our Territory.

*Thank You*

for your continued trust and partnership.

The Speaker of the House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands, the Honourable Corine George-Massicote, today announced the launch of the inaugural newsletter, 'House Matters'. The launch coincides with the 75th anniversary of the restoration of legislation in the Virgin Islands. 'House Matters', the name chosen by the Speaker, will provide residents with regular updates on legislative activities, regional and international engagement, and the standards that guide the work of the House.

"'House Matters' is an important step in keeping you informed and involved in the work we do," said Honourable Corine George-Massicote. The Speaker added,

"Our goal is to make sure every resident feels connected, heard and empowered. Inside, you'll find updates on our work in the House, highlights from regional and international meetings, and a closer look at the values and standards that guide us. Most importantly, you'll see how your voice, concerns and participation help shape the future of our democracy. We believe strong communities are built on strong relationships between representatives and residents, ideas and action. House Matters is our commitment to serving you with fairness, purpose and respect. As we move forward, we encourage you to stay informed, stay engaged and stay connected. Your voice matters, and your involvement makes our democracy stronger."

Key features of the inaugural issue include:

- A historical overview marking 75 years since the restoration of local legislative powers.
- Summaries of recent Bills, committee work and parliamentary milestones.
- Coverage of regional and international meetings attended by House members.
- Profiles highlighting the House's standards, ethics and community outreach initiatives.
- A section showcasing how constituent input has influenced policy and legislation.

House Matters will be distributed digitally and in print; copies will be available at the House of Assembly offices and partner community centres. Residents may also

subscribe for direct email delivery and access archived editions on the House's official website.

The launch forms part of a broader public engagement strategy tied to the 75th-anniversary observance, which includes community events, educational outreach and forums to solicit resident feedback on legislative priorities.

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**Gallery**

HOUSE HIGHLIGHTS | PARLIAMENT UPDATES | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

# HOUSE MATTERS

VOLUME 1  
MARCH 2026

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Championing Unity and Progress
- Education Through Parliament-Inspiring Future Leaders
- 75th Anniversary of the Legislature Highlights
- And Much More!!!

**Championing Unity and Progress**  
In the first and second quarters of 2025, the Speaker, Hon. Corine N. George-Massicotte had the honour of delivering keynote addresses at several pivotal events, each underscoring a theme of unity, resilience, and the transformative power of legislation.

**Education Through Parliament-Inspiring Future Leaders**  
In a forward-thinking approach, the Speaker launched the "Education Through Parliament" initiative, aimed at instilling a deep understanding of democratic processes and fostering civic engagement among young people.

**75th Anniversary of the Legislature Highlights**  
The Virgin Islands celebrated the 75th anniversary of the restoration of the Legislature with a series of commemorative events held in honor of this milestone.

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# HOUSE MATTERS

Inaugural Newsletter of the Speaker of the House, Virgin Islands

## Welcome to our First Issue!

This newsletter is an important step in keeping you informed and involved in the work we do. Our goal is to make sure every citizen feels connected, heard, and empowered.

Inside, you'll find updates on our work in the House, highlights from regional and international meetings, and a closer look at the values and standards that guide us. Most importantly, you'll see how your voice, concerns, and participation help shape the future of our democracy.

We believe strong communities are built on strong relationships between representatives and residents. Ideas and action: House Matters is our commitment to serving you with fairness, purpose, and respect.

As we move forward, we encourage you to stay informed, stay engaged, and stay connected. Your voice matters, and your involvement makes our democracy stronger.

Together, we are building a House that truly belongs to the people.

This inaugural issue marks an important step in strengthening accountability and ensuring that every citizen remains informed, empowered, and involved. Within these pages, you will find highlights of our legislative work, reflections from regional and international engagements, and insights into the ethical standards that guide our service. More importantly, you will see how your voice, concerns, and participation shape the future of our democracy.

We believe that strong institutions are built on strong relationships between representatives and residents, and your voice remains central to the work we do. Together, we are building a House that truly belongs to the people.

As we move forward together, we invite you to stay engaged, informed, and connected. Your participation strengthens our democracy, and your voice remains central to the work we do.

Together, we are building a House that truly belongs to the people.

**Celebrating Progress, Promoting Integrity, and Advocating for Public Representation.**

Enjoy,  
Hon. Corine N. George-Massicotte  
Speaker, House of Assembly,  
Virgin Islands

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## Meet the Speaker

Her journey began with a strong foundation in education and discipline. Having completed her schooling in the U.S. Virgin Islands, she went on to excel at the University of the Virgin Islands and later American University of Puerto Rico, graduating Magna Cum Laude and earning recognition on the National Bears' List. These early achievements reflected not only academic excellence, but also a determination to succeed.

Hon. Corine N. George-Massicotte represents a new generation of leadership in the Virgin Islands, one defined by dedication, resilience, and a deep commitment to public service. As the tenth Speaker of the House of Assembly and only the third woman to hold this distinguished role, she continues to break barriers while setting a powerful example for future leaders.

In 2005, she made a life-changing decision to move to the British Virgin Islands, a step that would shape her future in profound ways. Beginning her career as a Legal Secretary at J.S. Archibald & Co, she discovered a passion for law that would guide her path forward. With focus and perseverance, she pursued her legal studies at Nottingham Trent University and completed her professional training in London. By 2010, she had been called to the bar in both England and the British Virgin Islands, marking the start of an impactful legal career.

As a trial lawyer, she built a reputation for strong advocacy and a deep respect for justice and fairness. Her career later expanded into the financial services sector, where she served as Senior Legal Counsel of Trident Trust (BVI) Ltd, navigating complex legal and regulatory matters and strengthening governance practices. Her continued pursuit of excellence led her to earn a Master of Business Administration, along with professional distinctions as a Chartered Director and specialist in governance, risk, and compliance.

Today, as Speaker of the House of Assembly, Hon. George-Massicotte brings together years of experience, sound judgment, and principled leadership. Her story is one of courage, growth, and unwavering service: a reminder that leadership is built step by step, through hard work, integrity, and a clear vision for the future.

Her journey continues to inspire, proving that with determination and purpose, it is possible to lead, to serve, and to make a lasting difference for the people of the Virgin Islands.

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## Keynote Highlights: LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

### Expanding the Virgin Islands' Voice on the Global Stage

Leadership is not only what happens inside the House of Assembly. It is also what happens on behalf of the people, in rooms where ideas are exchanged, standards are raised, and democratic institutions are strengthened.

Throughout 2025, Speaker Hon. Corine N. George-Massicotte proudly carried the voice of the Virgin Islands beyond its shores, championing the issues that matter most to today's world. From strengthening democracy to promoting digital safety and building public trust, her regional and international engagements reflected a clear commitment to modern, people-focused leadership.

A standout moment was her participation in the **4th Commons and Overseas Territories Speakers' Conference (COTS)** in London. There, she delivered a powerful keynote address titled "Empowering Democracy: Resilience in the Face of Challenges," highlighting the real challenges faced by democratic institutions today. Her message focused on the importance of protecting democratic systems, ensuring stability, and maintaining public confidence even in times of uncertainty.

Closer to home, the Speaker also made an impact at a regional gathering of the **Caribbean Women in Leadership (CWIL)** initiative. Addressing the topic "The Impact of Technology-Facilitated Violence Against Women," she spoke candidly about the rise of online harassment, especially targeting women in leadership. Her message was clear: safety and respect must extend beyond physical spaces into the digital world.

Later in the year, she continued this important work at the **88th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference (CPA)** in Bridgetown, Barbados. There, she led an engaging workshop titled "Debate Not Hate: Not Accepting Abuse as an Outcome of Free Speech." The session reinforced the Virgin Islands' commitment to respectful dialogue, responsible leadership, and creating safer spaces for public service and community engagement.

These engagements represent more than attendance; they reflect leadership in action. By consistently representing the Virgin Islands on the regional and global stage, Speaker George-Massicotte ensures that her ideas, shared experiences, and global best practices are brought home to strengthen our institutions.

Each step forward helps to build a stronger House, deepen public trust, and support a more transparent, respectful, and people-centered system of governance.

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# HONOURING OUR LEGACY

## 75 Years of Legislative Leadership and Self-Determination

The 75th Anniversary of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands was a special moment for our territory. Under the theme "Honouring the Past, Shaping the Future: The Virgin Islands' 75 Year Journey Towards Self-Determination," the celebration looked back on how far we've come while looking ahead to where we are going.

For 75 years, the Legislature has been at the center of our democracy. It is where decisions are made, important issues are discussed, and the voices of the people are represented. Over time, it has helped shape the growth and development of the Virgin Islands and supported our journey toward self-determination.

This milestone gave us the chance to recognise and thank the leaders who helped build the foundation we stand on today. It also reminded us of the importance of continuing their work with honesty, accountability, and a strong commitment to serving the public.

As we move forward, we do so together, with pride in our history and confidence in our future.

### Celebrating Excellence: The Diamond Jubilee Gala

The Diamond Jubilee Gala stood as the flagship event of the celebrations. Hosted in an atmosphere of elegance and national pride, it brought together current and former legislators, senior public officers, regional counterparts and members of the diplomatic community.

Through ceremonial addresses, keynote reflections and cultural performances, the evening honoured pioneering leaders and highlighted the enduring link between governance, heritage, and national identity.

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## Investing in Tomorrow: Youth Engagement

A cornerstone of the anniversary programme was the **Mock Sitting with Students**, which placed young people at the heart of parliamentary life. Students assumed the roles of Speaker, Ministers, and Members, engaging in a structured debate and learning parliamentary procedure firsthand.

This initiative strengthened civic awareness, built confidence, and reinforced the importance of informed and engaged citizenship in sustaining democracy.

### Reflection and Connection: Afternoon Tea with the Speaker

Afternoon Tea with the Speaker provided a space for meaningful dialogue and reflection. Former legislators, senior public officers and guests shared experiences and perspectives that underscored the human dimension of public service and the importance of unity and continuity.

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## Culture and Community: Anniversary Concert

The Anniversary Concert brought the celebrations to life through music and performance, showcasing local talent and cultural pride. It reflected the deep connection between democratic development, identity and community spirit.

### Marking History: Special Sitting and Closing Service

These events beautifully captured the story of the Legislature's 75-year journey, honouring the sacrifices of the past, celebrating the progress of today, and inspiring the leaders of tomorrow.

The anniversary served as a powerful reminder that self-determination is not achieved overnight. It is built through service, active participation, and a shared sense of responsibility by all.

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## Afternoon Tea WITH THE Speaker

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## The Diamond Jubilee Gala

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**Anniversary Concert**

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*Diamond* of the Season Awards

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**EMPOWERING OUR FUTURE**  
Inspiring the Next Generation of Leaders

Learning about democracy doesn't have to stay in the classroom, and through the Education Parliament initiative, young people across the Territory are getting the chance to experience it for themselves.

Created as part of the Speaker's vision for youth development, this programme brings primary school students into the world of Parliament in a fun and meaningful way. Through mock House sittings and live-style debates, students step into leadership roles and learn how government works and why it matters.

During these sessions, students take on the roles of Members of Parliament and Ministers. They share ideas, debate important issues, and practice respectful discussion. Along the way, they learn the importance of teamwork, following procedures, and making thoughtful decisions.

They also develop valuable life skills like critical thinking, public speaking, problem-solving, and teamwork; skills that will support them both in school and in the future.

By opening the doors of Parliament to young people, the House is doing more than teaching. It is inspiring. It is investing in the next generation of leaders and helping to shape a brighter future for the Virgin Islands.

**Empowering Young Women to Lead**

This commitment to youth development goes beyond the classroom. At the *BEAM (Believe, Empowered, Ambitious Minds)* Event, the Speaker connected with young women from across the Emory Stout High School, encouraging them to dream big, lead with confidence, and believe in their potential.

Through sharing her own experiences and offering practical advice, she highlighted the importance of resilience, self-belief, and education in overcoming challenges. The event created a supportive and uplifting space where young women could speak openly, share their goals, and feel inspired to pursue their dreams.

Whether in the House of Assembly or out in the community, one message continues to stand strong: leadership starts from within. It begins with confidence, curiosity, and strong values.

By investing in young people today, the Virgin Islands is building a future filled with thoughtful, capable, and compassionate leaders.

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**DELIVERING FOR THE PEOPLE**  
Key Laws Shaping Our Future

In this first issue, we highlight some of the important bills and laws recently passed by the House of Assembly. These laws are designed to strengthen our institutions, support our communities, and improve daily life across the Virgin Islands. Each one reflects a commitment to progress, fairness, and good governance.

**House of Assembly (Management) Act, 2025**

- This law allows the House of Assembly to manage its administrative and financial operations more independently.

**Mutual Legal Assistance Act, 2025**

- This update strengthens how the Virgin Islands works with international partners—especially the United States—on legal matters. It also improves measures to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

**Road Traffic (Amendment) Act, 2025**

- This law introduces new traffic offences and increases penalties for existing ones. Its goal is to promote safer driving and improve road safety across the Territory.

**Customs Management and Duties (Amendment) Act, 2025**

- This amendment strengthens customs laws to better meet international standards. It helps improve how goods and financial activities are monitored to prevent illegal practices like money laundering.

**Criminal Justice (International Cooperation) (Amendment) Act, 2025**

- This law improves cooperation with other countries in criminal matters. It also strengthens efforts to meet global standards in fighting financial crimes and terrorism.

**Elections (Amendment) Bill, 2025**

- This bill proposes updates to the elections process to improve how elections are managed and ensure they remain fair, transparent, and effective.

Together, these measures represent meaningful steps toward a safer, stronger, and more accountable Virgin Islands.

For more information on the bills passed in 2025, visit <https://hwa.gov.vi/index.php/bills>

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**UPHOLDING PUBLIC TRUST**  
Building Trust Through Strong Values

A strong democracy is built on strong values. As *House Matters* launches its first issue, the House of Assembly reaffirms its commitment to ethical leadership, transparency, and responsible governance.

At the center of this commitment is the **Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Assembly**. This guide sets clear expectations for how Members serve the public.

**OUR SHARED STANDARDS**

**Accountability and Transparency**  
Members must always act in the best interest of the public. This includes avoiding conflicts of interest and being open about any personal or financial matters that could influence decisions.

**Respectful Conduct**  
Everyone deserves to be treated with respect. Members are expected to show courtesy and professionalism when working with colleagues, public officials, and members of the community.

**Upholding Law and Ethics**  
Members must follow the laws of the Virgin Islands and carry out their duties with honesty, fairness, and integrity.

**Responsible Use of Public Resources**  
Public resources belong to the people. They must be used only for official purposes, not for personal gain.

**Confidentiality**  
Sensitive information must be handled carefully and not shared or used inappropriately.

**Responsiveness to Constituents**  
Members are here to serve you. They are expected to listen, communicate openly, and represent the needs and concerns of their communities.

**Zero Tolerance for Corruption**  
Corruption in any form is not accepted. Bribery, misuse of power, or abuse of office will result in serious consequences.

These standards reflect a shared promise—to lead with integrity, serve with purpose, and build trust with the people of the Virgin Islands.

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**STRENGTHENING OUR DEMOCRACY**  
Protecting Independence and Good Governance

As the Virgin Islands looks to the future, strengthening the independence and effectiveness of the House of Assembly remains a central priority. An independent legislature is essential to transparent governance, ensuring that laws are made in the best interest of the people, free from undue influence or external pressure.

Protecting this independence requires continued focus and shared responsibility. Clear boundaries between legislative, executive and judicial functions must be maintained, while systems for accountability and oversight are continually strengthened. Ongoing professional development, open debate, and healthy public dialogue all play vital roles in supporting strong democratic institutions.

Through continued commitment to impartiality, transparency and good governance, the House of Assembly remains focused on building resilient leadership that will serve the Territory today and for generations to come.

**Enforcement and Oversight**

To support enforcement of these standards, a Commission for Standards shall be established to oversee compliance with the Code of Conduct. This independent body reviews concerns, provides ethical guidance and recommends corrective action when necessary.

By operating impartially and transparently, the Commission reinforces public confidence and ensures that Members are held to the highest standards of accountability and fairness.

**Commitment to Public Service**

Public office is a responsibility rooted in service. Members of the House of Assembly are expected to lead with impartiality, dedication and respect for the people they represent.

The Code of Conduct serves both as a guide and a safeguard, protecting the integrity of the legislative process and strengthening public trust in democratic institutions. Through these shared values, the House continues to uphold the principles that sustain good governance and community confidence.

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## Additional Documents or Media

- [press release speaker of the house announces inaugural newsletter.pdf](#)