



**THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE
Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802
340-774-0001**

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 527-2023

**BY THE GOVERNOR
OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS**

**TO ESTABLISH THE AMERICA250 COMMISSION OF THE UNITED STATES
VIRGIN ISLANDS**

WHEREAS, the U.S. Semi-quincentennial Commission was established by the 114th Congress in 2016 to inspire Americans to participate in the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the 250th Anniversary of the founding of our country presents the U.S. Virgin Islands with an opportunity to commemorate our struggles for justice, prosperity, and greatness, which will intertwine with our commemoration of the Centennial of United States Citizenship for Virgin Islanders on January 25, 1927; and

WHEREAS, the Semi-quincentennial Celebration is an occasion whereby all U.S. Citizens may be educated with a deeper understanding of our founding principles of democracy including the roles played by all states and territories in the development of these principles; and

WHEREAS, the people of the Virgin Islands are mindful of our heritage and uniqueness and endeavor to promote more unity not only among our islands but with who call the United States home; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge the enormous contribution to the socio-economic and political development of the Virgin Islands by those who migrated to the territory from the wider Caribbean to include but not limited to Puerto Rico, St. Lucia, Grenada, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Anguilla, Dominica, Haiti, St. Barths, St. Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the Dutch, and British West Indies, including the British Virgin Islands, whose contributions have been integral to the political, economic, and social development of the U.S. Virgin Islands; and

WHEREAS, in 1918 President Woodrow Wilson stated, "National aspirations must be respected; [people] may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent. "Self-determination" is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action . . ."; and

WHEREAS, U.S. citizenship was conferred on U.S. Virgin Islanders on January 25, 1927, whereby The Organic Act of 1936, and subsequently The Revised Organic Act of 1954 laid the foundation for self-governance; and

WHEREAS, prominent Virgin Islanders such as Alexander Hamilton, Edward Wilmot Blyden, Hubert Henry Harrison, William H. Hastie, Ruby Rouss, Casper Holstein, Roy Innis, Bertha C. Boschulte, and D. Hamilton Jackson have helped shape the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of an America250 Commission of the United States Virgin Islands will aim to bring all American people together to promote the common good while recognizing the power of individual historic and cultural experiences;

NOW THEREFORE, I, Albert Bryan Jr., Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Revised Organic Act of 1954, as amended, do hereby **ORDER**:

SECTION 1. There is established within the Office of the Governor, an America250 Commission of the United States Virgin Islands.

SECTION 2. The purpose of the America250 Commission of the United States Virgin Islands is to develop programs and plan for the official observance across the U.S. Virgin Islands of the Semi-quincentennial Anniversary of the founding of the United States, as marked by the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the commemoration of the Centennial of United States Citizenship for Virgin Islanders on January 25, 1927.

SECTION 3. Membership of the America250 Commission of the United States Virgin Islands will consist of seventeen (17) members as follows:

- (a) Five (5) Native Virgin Islanders shall be appointed by the Governor as representatives of the native groups of the Virgin Islands which will consist of three (3) of African Caribbean ethnic, one (1) of French Caribbean ancestry, and one (1) of Boricua origin, of whom two (2) shall be from the island of St. Croix, two (2) shall be from the island of St. Thomas, and one (1) shall be from the island of St. John.
- (b) Three (3) members shall be appointed by the Governor from the Faith Community.
- (c) Three (3) members shall be appointed by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands.
- (d) Four (4) members shall be appointed by the Judicial Branch.
- (e) The Governor and the Senate President will be ex-officio members.

The term of the appointment is for the duration of the Commission's existence, which will terminate on September 30, 2027.

SECTION 4. An Interim America250 Planning Committee is established upon enactment of this Order, which will begin the formation and collaboration of the commemoration events. Members of this Interim Committee will continue as the Governor's appointees to the America250 Commission of the United States Virgin Islands. Those members are:

- (1) Verdel Petersen from the island of St. Croix
- (2) Janette Millin Young and Malik Sekou from the island of St. Thomas
- (3) Carla Sewer from the island of St. John

The Committee will work collaboratively with the Department of Tourism, and other community organizations that promote and preserve the Virgin Islands' heritage and traditions.

SECTION 5. The Interim America250 Planning Committee will form sub-committees with specific responsibilities to accomplish established goals. Sub-committees will be chaired by committee members and may include non-committee participants.

SECTION 6.

(a) Additional members may be appointed to the Commission by the Governor upon his own determination or upon the request of the Committee.

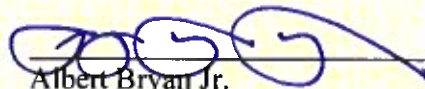
(b) Any member may resign upon submission of written notice to the Governor.

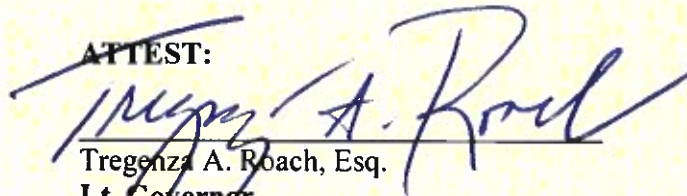
SECTION 7. The Commission shall determine a budget for the planned events and shall present a budget to the Governor for approval of funding.

SECTION 8. All Departments and Agencies and Instrumentalities of the Government of the Virgin Islands are directed to collaborate with the Commission and participate in the planned events.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto executed this Executive Order by setting my hand and causing the Seal of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands to be affixed at St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, this 1st day of July, A.D., 2023.




Albert Bryan Jr.
Governor

ATTEST:

Tregenza A. Roach, Esq.
Lt. Governor