ACT NO. 6828

BILL NO. 26-0037

TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

OF THE UNITED STATES

Regular Session

2006

An Act petitioning the United States Congress to amend the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands, to empower the Legislature, with the approval of the voters, to charter municipal governments on St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix; to establish a Municipal Government Charter Commission, and to provide for a referendum on the charter of municipal governments on all three islands

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Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:

SECTION 1. The Governor of the Virgin Islands, on behalf of the Government and people of the Virgin Islands, shall petition the Congress of the United States to amend the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands, as amended, to empower the Legislature of the Virgin Islands to create, abolish and consolidate municipalities; to change their territorial limits; to determine their organization and functions; and to authorize them to develop programs for the general welfare and to establish any agencies necessary for that purpose; except, that no law creating, abolishing or consolidating municipalities may take effect until ratified in a referendum by a majority of the qualified electors voting in the referendum within the territorial limits of each of the municipalities to be created, abolished or consolidated.

SECTION 2. (a) Following the enactment by Congress of enabling legislation pursuant to Section 1 of this Act, the Municipal Government Charter Commission ("the Commission") must be established, and must consist of twelve members as follows: six appointed by the Governor and six appointed by the President of the Legislature. Of the six members appointed by each official, three must be residents of the island of St. Croix, two must be residents of the island of St. Thomas, and one must be a resident of the island of St. John.

(b) The Commission shall elect from among its members a chairperson, a vice chairperson, and a secretary, and may establish such committees and employ such administrative and technical staff as it considers appropriate.

(c) The Commission shall conduct a series of public hearings and shall devise and execute a comprehensive program of public information and education to enable the voters of the Virgin Islands to render informed judgments in referenda on each island to determine whether the Government of the Virgin Islands should be restructured as provided for Sections 1 and 3 of this Act.

(d) The Commission shall:

(1) prepare drafts of municipal charters for the islands of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix which outline in detail how the proposed municipalities will be organized, which of the functions presently performed by the territorial government will be assumed by the municipal governments, how the municipal government will be financed, what will happen to existing employees of the territorial government whose functions are assumed by the municipal governments, and other related issues;

(2) prepare and arrange for publication in local newspapers of general circulation articles on municipal governments and on issues that respond to questions raised by interested residents; and

(3) take such further actions as it considers appropriate to assist the voters of the Virgin Islands to understand the issue to be decided in the proposed referenda on municipal government.

SECTION 3. (a) The Commission shall complete its assignment as outlined in Section 2 (d) of this Act within seven months after the appointment of its members.

(b) If Congress enacts enabling legislation pursuant to Section 1 of this Act, referenda must be held on the islands of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix on the second Tuesday in June 2007, in conjunction with the General Election, to enable the voters of the islands to determine whether the Government of the Virgin Islands should be restructured through the creation of municipal governments pursuant to the draft municipal government charters provided for in Section 2 (d) (1) of this Act.

(c) The question to be placed on the ballots is:

"Shall the Government of the Virgin Islands be restructured in order to provide for the establishment of municipal government pursuant to the Municipal Charter proposed for this island by the Municipal Government Charter Commission?"

(d) The Municipal Government Charter shall become effective on any island where approved by a majority of the voters participating in referendum within six months after the Supervisor of Election certifies the result of the referendum.

Thus passed by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands on March 8, 2006.

Witnessed our Hands and Seal of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands this 17th Day of March, A.D., 2006.

Lorraine L. Berry
President

Juan Figueroa-Serville
Legislative Secretary

The above bill is hereby approved.

Witness my hand and the Seal of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, this 7th day of April, A.D., 2006.

Charles W. Turnbull
Governor