

TOWARD A FUTURE OF OPPORTUNITY



 **deJONGH**

TOGETHER We Can!

FRANCIS
DEMOCRATS

2006

TOWARD A FUTURE OF OPPORTUNITY

I want to be your next Governor and Greg Francis wants to be your next Lt. Governor because we believe in the Promise of the Virgin Islands. Greg and I believe that we possess the talents, skills, passion, preparation and drive to deliver on this Promise - to lead these islands and make positive changes in the lives of every man, woman and child in the Virgin Islands. We know that we can make a difference.

A deJongh-Francis Administration will transform the structure of public education so that our public schools can meet the challenge of preparing every Virgin Islands child for a future of opportunity. We will have two fully independent school districts, each headed by a Superintendent who will be responsible for, and be held accountable for, the performance of the district. Principals will be given the authority and the resources to run their schools. Teachers will be given the materials they need in their classrooms and the support they need so they and the school system will be fully compliant with federal and local laws.

A deJongh-Francis Administration will fulfill government's primary role of keeping our people safe. Our Police Department will be fully staffed and each district will be run by a Police Chief appointed by the Commissioner. Each Chief will be held to account for the performance of the officers under him and the safety of the population in the district. Neighborhood policing will help restore the trust which is necessary if the police are to be effective and our communities secure.

A deJongh-Francis Administration will resolve the long-overdue legal obligations of retroactive pay and the unfunded liability of the Government Employees Retirement System. We will institute a multi-year plan to address both of these obligations. We will lead fairly and reward hard work; our Administration will be comprised of dedicated and motivated employees, providing the customer-focused service we all want and deserve.

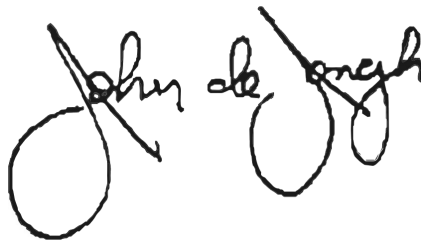
A deJongh Francis administration will focus on sustainable economic development and building our private sector in order to create quality jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities. We will reverse the decline in job creation in our islands, especially on St. Croix; we will bring cruise lines back to the island of St. Croix.

A deJongh-Francis Administration will provide a health care system that is affordable, accessible, top-quality and universal. Our health care system will have strong management, hospitals independent of government red tape, a strong base of community clinics, and outreach programs targeting our children, elders, disabled and veterans.

A deJongh-Francis Administration will also give a voice to those that have not been heard from for a long time. We will address the needs of the homeless and mentally ill with appropriate support programs and transitional services.

Greg Francis and I are confident that Together We Will Lead these islands to our best days; hopeful and confident that Together We Can all work to fulfill the promise of our generation and lay a solid foundation of prosperity and opportunity for future generations. Join us. Together We Can dream big dreams and make them come true. With God's blessings and your vote, remember —

Together We Can!



GREG R. FRANCIS

TOWARD A FUTURE OF OPPORTUNITY

I. KEEPING OUR CITIZENS SAFE

PROTECTION

Without a doubt, the most pressing and urgent problem facing us is crime. We can no longer accept, year after year, the excuse that there is a critical shortage of police officers, not enough money for training, salaries and vital equipment. We all deserve to be safe and feel safe in our homes. We should not have to worry about leaving our homes unattended, or worse still, being at home and having our homes invaded. Greg and I believe that none of us should have to be anxious all day until we know that our families are safe and our homes have been locked up for the night. We especially do not want to worry about predatory behavior endangering the women and children in our families.

A deJongh-Francis Administration will restore public trust in our Police Department. Important to restoring this trust is the understanding and belief that no one is above the law regardless of an individual's position or title and that all will be treated fairly and justly. Equally important, police officers must be held accountable for their actions when their actions violate their own rules and regulations or the Virgin Islands' laws. All citizens of the Virgin Islands should expect and receive excellence in service and courtesy from our police officers.

PREVENTION

A deJongh-Francis Administration will be as serious about crime prevention as we are about protection and prosecution. Crime will be substantially reduced when we provide our children with good alternatives to bad choices. We will invest in after-school programs and sports programs; Head Start and varsity sports, steel pan and sailing--our children will be surrounded by wholesome alternatives and better choices. Unless we as a community provide better choices for our youth and greater opportunities for them to chart their own futures, we will have failed another generation.

PROSECUTION

If you do the crime, you will do the time regardless of who you are or who you know. In a deJongh-Francis Administration prosecutors will be well trained and supported by high quality investigative resources that will ensure an increased conviction rate. Our top targets will be career criminals, and those who abuse our women and children. With vigorous prosecution, we will stem the tide of mismanagement of public property by public officials and citizens, as well as white collar crimes. We will not reappoint judges who do not expedite these types of cases or who do not adequately punish serious and repeat offenders. Our law enforcement professionals must know that the criminal justice system will support their efforts to keep us safe and lock criminals up.

- Replace the Territorial Police Chief with two district-level Police Chiefs appointed by the Commissioner of Police
- Petition the federal government for permanent policing of our wide open marine borders against illegal drug and weapons trafficking and illegal immigrant activity
- Institute sector patrols, with specific officers being responsible for the patrol and monitoring of specific sectors during specific shifts
- Re-establish the Police Auxiliary Unit
- Recruit trained personnel from the military services, and develop a lateral transfer system
- Increase salaries for police officers, develop attractive compensation packages and continue education assistance
- Invest in additional training and certification for police officers and provide incentives for continued education
- Improve police support services by providing an in-house psychologist, individualized counseling and family support programs
- Release police officers from clerical and administrative duties, and replace them with civilian workers



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- Increase police presence within our communities
- Open more police sub-stations in underserved areas
- Invest in an improved state-of-the-art crime lab with appropriate staffing
- Expand adequate lighting and camera surveillance in towns and high crime locations
- Maintain an effective sex offender registry, and make this information easily accessible to the public for review
- Re-establish rehabilitation programs to include training and education for inmates to aid their integration back into society
- Increase the penalty for the crime of witness intimidation
- Immediately submit legislation to remove the Attorney General as a member of any board or commission not specifically related to law enforcement
- Assign sufficient Assistant Attorneys General to the Police Department to ensure proper filing of cases and handling of evidence
- Hire the required number of attorneys, paralegals and support staff to fully prepare and prosecute all criminal matters

II. EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN

The goal of preparing each Virgin Islands child so that each child is able to reach his or her fullest potential cannot be met unless we provide each child with the fundamental building blocks for life-long learning. The reorganization of the structure of public education must always be measured against this primary goal. A deJongh-Francis Administration will place emphasis on early childhood education with a central emphasis on reading.

A deJongh-Francis Administration will focus on the wide spectrum of our children's learning stages -- from early childhood education to secondary education with a commitment to emphasize the specific requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Studies have found that if children do not learn to read by the third grade, they will struggle throughout middle and high school. Until third grade, children learn to read. After third grade, children read to learn.

These findings form the basis of the deJongh-Francis commitment that within six years every public school student in the Virgin Islands entering the fourth grade will be reading at grade level. We will break the cycle of frustration that has held back so many of our children. Whether it is an academic path leading to college or a technical path leading to a career in a technical field, we will provide each child with the tools to succeed in school and in life.

- Establish two independent school districts, one for St. Thomas-St. John and one for St. Croix, with each superintendent having administrative autonomy
- Re-focus the Commissioner of Education's role on territorial educational policy and federal relations

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- Hire a Facilities Manager in each district with responsibility to oversee school maintenance programs
- Support the Office of Testing and Evaluation to administer standardized testing and fairly measure performance
- Create an Office of Public-Private Partnership in the Office of the Commissioner to access private and non-governmental funding sources and to foster community involvement with public education
- Affirm the importance of a curriculum that stresses reading, writing, math, and the sciences as the central building blocks of learning
- Assure parents that children with disabilities and learning differences be educated in regular school classes to the maximum extent possible
- Build new schools, where necessary, to replace obsolete and dilapidated facilities
- Design and build a state of the art educational complex on St. John to include the relocation of the Julius E. Sprauve School
- Collaborate with community organizations and alumni groups in the upgrade of high school gymnasiums on the islands of St. Croix and St. Thomas to meet the needs of each island community
- Develop modern alternative schools to address the unique needs of students with behavioral problems
- Implement educational options for children with severe disabilities who cannot be included in the regular classroom setting
- Undertake tests, assessments, and evaluations to include physical examinations, psychological examination, social history, and observation in education setting to determine each child's individual needs – resulting in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that will be actively utilized
- Aggressively implement site-based management by the principal of each school with the necessary funding to accomplish timely procurement, financial, and personnel processing
- Increase the number of in-school guidance counselors, school psychologists, social workers and school nurses
- Promote neighborhood after school programs for young people; encourage collaboration by inter-governmental agencies, faith-based organizations and the private sector
- Develop a comprehensive strategic plan to monitor issues that impact school accreditation
- Dramatically expand the career and technical curriculum in each district to enhance and coordinate job opportunities
- Expedite and improve the teacher certification program to achieve the mandate of No Child Left Behind
- Develop a teacher advocacy center to train general education teachers to have the skills to address diversity of learners in their classes
- Collaborate with officials at the University of the Virgin Islands to improve the teacher training program
- Institute a competitive salary structure that is comparable to U.S. national norms for education professionals
- Enhance professional development programs for teachers and paraprofessionals

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- Ensure that in-class and external support from teachers, paraprofessionals, therapists, special education teachers, administrators, psychologists, counselors, and resource persons is in place to assist with the education of children with special education needs
- Mandate coordination and communication between the Departments of Health, Human Services, and Education
- Complete the technical transformation of our schools with all schools having Internet access and computer-assisted learning facilities
- Augment school libraries and library services at all levels
- Evaluate the feasibility and practicality of expanding Department of Education oversight to include day-care centers and pre-kindergartens, in order to promote early learning programs focusing on pre-school reading and cognitive skills
- Expand the staffing and availability of the English-As-A-Second Language programs
- Hire truant officers to monitor and patrol the student population, and re-focus multi-agency attention on reducing truancy and underage loitering
- Improve school security as a deterrent to school vandalism and violence
- Support expansion of curriculum offerings in the following areas: art, music, health education, Advanced Placement courses, physical education, and athletic offerings

III. OUR CHILDREN AND OUR FAMILIES

We know that government cannot solve all of our problems. We also know that sometimes we as a community must work with the government to come to the aid of our own.

Greg Francis and I will encourage collaboration and coordination with non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, and not-for-profit entities. These organizations are on the front line of domestic disharmony, and we will increase their funding to improve and expand service delivery for needy individuals and families. Organizations which shelter battered women and abused children, feed the poor and homeless, and care for society's forgotten citizens should not fear closure because the government has not provided their appropriations.

- Effectively monitor the enforcement of child support orders as well as the distribution of child support payments
- Appoint an American Disabilities Act Coordinator
- Fully fund a Virgin Islands Children's Health Insurance Program (VICHIP) for uninsured children
- Enact legislation to create a Virgin Islands' sponsored Section 529 Plan to establish tax deferred education savings accounts to help families save for their children's higher education
- Construct a youth detention facility on the island of St. Thomas
- Identify eligible senior citizens needing expanded assistance programs and facilities
- Improve the In-Home Care Services in the Department of Human Services for the elderly and disabled

- Enhance "one-stop" services for the elderly, coordinated through the Department of Human Services and involving all agencies which are mandated to provide these services
- Build a long-term facility to house and treat our mentally ill patients
- Enhance "one-stop" services for the physically challenged and mentally ill in our community, coordinated through the Department of Human Services and involving all agencies mandated to provide these services
- Provide adequate transportation services, especially for the elderly and the disabled
- Provide shelter and appropriate medical and therapeutic intervention to transition the homeless off the streets and into more productive lives

IV. HEALTHY VIRGIN ISLANDERS

A deJongh-Francis Administration will meet the primary challenge to provide top quality health care to our citizens by making it accessible and affordable. This means that every one must have health insurance.

A deJongh-Francis Administration will revamp the Medical Assistance and Community Health programs to meet the needs and wants of its customers and be more diligent in responding and conforming to federal requirements. We must meaningfully address the issues most relevant to the homeless and mentally ill. We require insurance for our cars, and we must also require insurance for our people. Insurance premiums can be reduced to affordable levels by including more people under group insurance plans.

We will ensure that everyone who is employed will be able to afford health insurance. The government will do its part to provide insurance for private employees not covered by their employers

and to those people who cannot afford even reduced premiums. Every man, woman and child in the Virgin Islands must be covered by health insurance. Medicare and Medicaid must be integrated into this universal health insurance program.

The goal of the deJongh-Francis Administration is to make it possible for everyone to seek and obtain top quality health care without hesitation or delay. When we achieve this, our hospitals will no longer be used as the first and often too late point of contact with the medical system. Our people will know that they can go to the doctor of their choice to prevent or control many of the conditions and diseases which now go untreated.

A deJongh-Francis Administration will maintain the quality of care and the financial solvency of the Roy Lester Schneider Hospital, the Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital, and the Charlotte Kimmelman Cancer Center. We will complete the Virgin Islands Cardiac Center and support the Ingerborg Nesbitt Clinic, the East End Medical Center and the Myrah Keating Smith Clinic.

- Coordinate with the Delegate to Congress and execute a Congressional strategy to increase territorial Medicaid funding and initiate U.S. Virgin Islands participation in the Supplementary Security Insurance (SSI) Program
- Reduce the dependence on contractual traveling nurses by enhancing the university and hospital based nursing programs, and increasing the salaries of nurses and allied health care professionals
- Include the mentally ill in our universal health insurance program
- Ensure accreditation from the U.S. Department of Health for the Home Health Care Program

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- Develop a comprehensive, coordinated system in conjunction with non-governmental organizations to provide appropriate follow-up services to people living with mental illness and substance abuse
- Enhance the targeting of programs to address specific health problems such as sexually transmitted diseases, high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes
- Strengthen all local initiatives addressing HIV/AIDS

V. OUR INFRASTRUCTURE AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

The primary infrastructure concern of every resident today is an affordable and improved electrical production system. In this time of rising fuel costs, the V.I. Water and Power Authority's total reliance on fuel oil results in staggering electric bills. The deJongh-Francis Administration will focus on renegotiating a more favorable HOVENSA fuel agreement, identify and utilize alternative sources of energy, refine the efficiency of our electrical production systems and devise a comprehensive territorial strategy to reduce our total reliance on fuel oil. We must see reductions in our monthly electricity bills.

We continue to be plagued by a dilapidated sewage system that blankets our islands with noxious odors and discharges raw sewage onto our streets and into our pristine waters. We continue to be plagued by a solid waste management system that is out-of-date and out of compliance. We are operating under judicially established consent decrees, but the underlying problems persist because of a lack of political will to aggressively resolve these issues. The deJongh-Francis Administration will make these areas a top priority and provide guidance and resources to the V.I. Waste Management Authority.

A deJongh-Francis Administration knows that we must respect the environment and preserve our natural resources. We are committed to fostering an atmosphere where the dual interests of the environment and increasing economic opportunities for our residents are reasonably balanced. A comprehensive land and water use plan is needed to create a rational framework for environmental protection and development.

A deJongh-Francis Administration will address the terrible conditions and poor planning of our roads and road systems which destroy our vehicles and result in our spending a substantial portion of our day in traffic.

We are committed to a well planned maintenance program to address the condition of our roads and to implementing the design and construction work required to improve our road systems.

- Contact HOVENSA to open discussions on the per barrel pricing mechanism stated in the contracts
- Identify for the V.I. Water and Power Authority, funding for the installation of two Waste-Heat Recovery boilers
- Enter into discussions with HOVENSA, St. Croix Renaissance Park, and the V.I. Water and Power Authority on the feasibility of utilizing coal and petroleum coke as alternative energy sources
- Utilize a working group comprised of the V.I. Water and Power Authority, V.I. Energy Office, and HOVENSA to develop an action plan to implement alternative non-carbon energy sources
- Develop and implement a comprehensive land and water use plan directed at greater consistency, fairness, and predictability in land use decisions

- Direct the V.I. Waste Management Authority to seek technologically sound solutions to island specific solid waste disposal problems, giving first consideration to proven, responsible, credit worthy manufacturers with verifiable track records and sound environmental practices
- Direct the V.I. Waste Management Authority to evaluate the technical and financial feasibility of a natural wastewater treatment system for the island of St. Croix
- Direct the V.I. Waste Management Authority and the Department of Public Works to formulate and implement a comprehensive recycling and composting program at the neighborhood level on each island
- Enforce storm water control regulations to protect our inshore waters, reefs and mangroves
- Better coordinate federal participation in our roads and highway programs, establish improved standards for proper road repairs and improvements
- Streamline permitting processes for building, coastal zone management and other required permits to avoid unnecessary costs and delays which retard economic development
- Improve VITRAN's organizational structure, delivery system, and employee relations
- Conduct a study to examine the feasibility of establishing a public-private partnership utilizing "dollar" vans in conjunction with VITRAN, to augment public transportation services in the territory
- Implement, with the Federal Highway Administration, a program to subsidize air and ferry service for inter-island travel.

VI. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

A deJongh-Francis Administration believes that economic opportunity must be for everyone, not just a select few. We must expand and grow the private sector economy - for both large and small businesses.

A deJongh-Francis Administration will welcome new businesses and support existing ones. A deJongh-Francis Administration will make it easier to start a business and to succeed in business. We will put in place a structure that allows citizens to have access to commercial bank financing, venture capital and other expanded financial mechanisms. We will foster economic initiatives by revising our tax code.

Training and workforce development programs for Virgin Islanders of all ages are key if our residents are to realize good jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities. We will put in place carefully monitored "Buy Local" and "Hire Local" policies throughout our economy. Together, our efforts will ensure the recycling of funds within our local economy and make real the promise of economic opportunity for all in these islands, now and well into the future.

BUILDING OUR ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

- Support the planned development of the St. Croix Renaissance Park to include alternate electrical production capabilities, water production, port services, technology park space, and cruise ship services
- Modernize port facilities on St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John to accommodate warehousing and re-packaging capabilities
- Create a venture guaranty fund to provide credit enhancement and technical support to small and mid-sized businesses to foster entrepreneurship and job creation
- Develop a program to provide performance bonding to qualified local contractors

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- Petition the federal Small Business Administration (SBA) to allow local loan origination and approval in the U.S. Virgin Islands
- Promote small business incubator facilities where existing and potential small businesses can locate and operate at a reasonable cost by sharing common overhead facilities
- Establish a certified development company, licensed by the U.S. Small Business Administration, in the Government Development Bank
- Meet with insurers and brokers in the U.S., European, and Caribbean markets in order to diversify market opportunities to reduce premiums for consumers, as well as increase capacity and competition in the Virgin Islands insurance market
- Undertake a comprehensive analysis of all taxes, fees and assessments to streamline collections, enhance revenues, and eliminate disincentives to economic growth and job creation
- Execute a Congressional strategy to improve our relations with the U.S. Department of Treasury and members of Congress to support changes to legislation and regulations that impact the Economic Development Commission
- Initiate an immediate overhaul of the Economic Development Authority, with special emphasis on compliance with recent legislation and specifically targeting potential beneficiaries in fields such as insurance management, asset management, medical sector, e-commerce and other technology-dependent firms capable of providing job opportunities for residents

OUR TOURISM INDUSTRY

- Develop a tourism marketing plan for each island that establishes its own unique brand and incorporates non-traditional partners in the individual marketing of the islands to broaden financial resources
- Establish a charrette-format of industry participants to develop a brand for St. Croix that is unique within the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Caribbean, and implement the brand strategy with land and water-based attractions and activities
- Meet with the member lines of the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association to reinstitute the Long Term Operating Agreement, and recapture cruise lines for St. Croix
- Provide support from the Economic Development Administration and the Department of Tourism to local businesses to develop, market and operate on-shore activities with specific emphasis on St. Croix
- Create an office within the V.I. Port Authority dedicated to marketing the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport and the Cyril E. King Airport
- Develop a prospect list of major hotel brand operators and time-share companies that we can attract to the island of St. Croix
- Develop, with the owners of small, independent hotel properties, a repairs and renovations program based on the award of tax credits and funding guarantees, as well as a marketing program to promote these smaller properties

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- Develop a Convention Center on the island of St. Croix
- Develop sports complexes on St. Croix and St. Thomas
- Incorporate the mega-yacht, charter boat and charter yacht industries as integral parts of our tourism marketing campaign
- Meet with government officials of the British Virgin Islands to coordinate USVI-BVI marine industry policies aimed at expanding day charters and game fishing excursions
- Lobby Congress for revisions to federal regulations related to the marine industry which put the U.S. V.I. at a competitive disadvantage with our Caribbean neighbors
- Review the mooring policies and fee structures to be competitive with other Caribbean destinations and to assure environmental protection measures are practical and feasible
- Lobby to secure additional federal money for enhanced port security
- Establish the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport as a feeder hub to Eastern Caribbean markets, expand air cargo transportation, and expand the charter flight business with packaged vacations and excursion offerings
- Evaluate the feasibility of pricing incentives for airline partners based on the number of passengers brought into the territory
- Develop a hotel training/hospitality school

OUR AGRICULTURAL AND FISHING INDUSTRIES

- Support the protection of government landholdings zoned for agricultural uses
- Require the Department of Agriculture, to assess the status of outstanding lease agreements and analyze the best practices to ensure that each lessee is able to undertake the required investment for agricultural purposes
- Develop a strategic plan for agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries that will focus on the economics of production, labor, access to capital, utilization of government landholdings, and distribution of products based on an import substitution business model
- Direct the Department of Agriculture to identify federal funding sources to further the production and distribution of local agricultural products
- Direct the Department of Agriculture to create better marketing vehicles for farmers to sell their products to Economic Development Commission beneficiaries (e.g. hotels), retail grocery outlets, restaurants, and government-sponsored or operated meal programs
- Establish a governmental relationship with the fishing industry that is supportive, enhancing, and guarantees that fishermen have a meaningful voice in industry matters
- Work toward sustainable management of Virgin Island's fishing resources through proactive implementation of local management actions

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- Re-examine existing closed areas (Virgin Islands National Monument, Caribbean Council, Territorial Parks) in order to ensure that fishery resources benefit the fishing industry
- Establish within the Government Development Bank loans and guarantee programs that recognize the business structures and business cycles of the agricultural and fishing industry participants

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The deJongh-Francis Administration is committed to elevation the importance given to workforce development.

We commit to meaningful investment in our human and intellectual capital. The training and retraining of our adults is as important as the education of our children. Not only will the deJongh-Francis Administration leave no child behind, we will also make sure that no adult is left behind.

- Empower the Workforce Investment Board as the primary entity on workforce issues; workforce development needs, the assessment of skill shortages, projection of labor market growth trends, and the development of solution based training and employment strategies
- Develop a stronger working relationship between the Workforce Investment Board and the Economic Development Authority to develop strategies that result in a more targeted placement of the local workforce
- Develop outreach and marketing programs targeting potential customers of the Workforce Investment Board, including dislocated workers, mentally and physically challenged individuals, veterans, high school drop-outs, public assistance recipients, and others who need retraining and alternative education programs

- Re-institute the Registered Apprenticeship Program to offer on the job training and related technical instruction in industries such as construction, manufacturing, telecommunications, information technology, hotel and hospitality management, health care, client service, and retail

VII. MANAGING OUR GOVERNMENT EFFICIENTLY

A deJongh-Francis Administration is committed to ensuring that decision-making is broadly based and transparent.

We will aggressively support a change in organizational structure that results in government becoming more responsive and closer to the people. Our government must be more customer-friendly. Our government must facilitate, not hinder, the people who use its services. Government processes and paperwork must be streamlined.

People trying to access social service benefits should not have to go from office to office answering the same questions over and over again. The deJongh-Francis Administration will better manage the government's outstanding bonded indebtedness, freeing up valuable revenues and redirecting them to areas of critical need.

The payment of retroactive salary obligations and the Government Employees Retirement System (GERS) unfunded liability cannot be ignored. A deJongh Francis-Administration will give top priority to the money owed to all government employees.

We propose a multi-year payout as part of a comprehensive strategy to pay these obligations. It is imperative that these obligations and payments be a part of the annual operating budget submitted by the Governor.

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- Initiate financial reform of the GERS by implementing the two-tier system
- Remove the Division of Banking and Insurance from the Office of the Lt. Governor
- Remove the Office of the Tax Assessor from the Office of the Lt. Governor, and the distribution of tax bills from the Department of Finance and place these functions in the Bureau of Internal Revenue
- Transfer the Office of Information Technology to the Office of Management and Budget
- Remove the Bureau of Economic Research from the Office of the Governor, and place it in the Economic Development Authority
- Create an Office of Hispanic Affairs
- Transform government operations to an e-government strategy designed to capture the power of the Internet to provide enhanced customer satisfaction, efficiency, and information delivery
- Establish and maintain a disciplined financial plan for GERS to liquidate the unfunded liability that incorporates annual appropriations and a one-time cash injection
- Institute island-specific budgeting by government departments and agencies to achieve greater transparency; decentralize document input, vendor processing and check disbursement at the Department of Finance
- Transfer the V.I. Film Promotion Office to the Economic Development Authority
- Establish a Productivity Bank to fund initiatives that will result in efficiency savings and improvements greater than the required investment
- Aggressively support the undertaking of a V.I. Constitutional Convention
- Appoint members to the Municipal Government Charter Commission as authorized by Act No. 6228

SPORTS AND RECREATION

- Create a Department of Sports and Recreation to help focus attention and resources on recreational activities and venues, with a special emphasis on youth activities
 - Upgrade and construct neighborhood recreational centers
 - Insure that all recreational facilities are staffed with trained personnel who provide wholesome recreational activities for our citizens during realistic hours
 - Fund and construct multipurpose sports centers on St. Croix and St. Thomas
- Expand intra- and inter-island league sports competition
- Provide modern sports facilities for local sports including horse racing, baseball, softball, drag racing, cricket, soccer, and track and field

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DEBT MANAGEMENT

- Develop a comprehensive debt issuance strategy, that includes the semi-autonomous entities, aimed at better managing our bonded indebtedness
- Implement a debt issuance policy that gives priority to debt repayment by separate revenue sources
- Identify all outstanding bonds that can be refinanced, refunded or defeased, in order to take advantage of lower interest rates and/or reduced annual debt service
- Utilize Tax Increment Financing bonds to underwrite economic development initiatives in specific areas

DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS (*Charlotte Amalie, Christiansted, Cruz Bay, Frederiksted*)

- Evaluate the feasibility of downtown development districts with utilization of tax increment financing to foster specific infrastructure investment in the districts
- Encourage and provide affordable loans to rebuild and refurbish homes in the historic districts
- Evaluate the extension of investment credits to owners of downtown properties, to encourage the renovation and refurbishment of these properties for residential and commercial purposes
- Identify federal funding sources for the renovation and refurbishment of the historic districts
- Evaluate the feasibility of Wi-Fi networks within the downtown districts

ST. JOHN ISSUES

- Make the St. John Administrator a signatory on the St. John Capital Improvement Fund
- Provide for the delivery of key government services on St. John, thereby relieving St. Johnians of the burden of traveling to St. Thomas for routine transactions
- Relocate the Julius Sprauve School from Cruz Bay and replace it with a modern K-12 education complex
- Hire a Strategic Planner in the Office of the St. John Administrator to focus on St. John planning issues
- Build a vendor's plaza to promote small, local businesses

WATER ISLAND ISSUES

- Evaluate the installation of an auxiliary electric power cable to Water Island
- Follow through with the completion of the fire station proposed by the U.S. Department of Interior and provide local funding for maintenance; explore expansion of the facility to include other essential services
- Develop an immediate infrastructure plan that includes: removing junk cars and trucks, road maintenance to include brush removal and fixing of pot holes, and enhancement to the beach area, the community pavilion and bathroom facilities.
- Construct an adequate and safe dock facility
- Undertake a plan for the revitalization of Water Island's tourism economy

VIII. IMPROVING OUR QUALITY OF LIFE

The rising cost of living in the Virgin Islands has some of us believing that we have to leave our beloved islands because we can no longer afford to maintain a decent standard of living.

Many parents and guardians are forced to choose between a second or third job or spending quality time with their families. Indeed, far too many Virgin Islanders have seen their standard of living and quality of life decline in recent years.

We will expand affordable housing opportunities, improve recreational facilities, and target “bread and butter” issues. These are but a few areas we will attack to raise and improve the quality of life for everyone.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Aggressively pursue the return of the V.I. Housing Authority to local government control
- Devise a fiscal management plan to supervise and maintain the V.I. Housing Authority under local government control
- Dedicate parcels of government-owned land to initiate new affordable housing programs for first-time home buyers
- Re-institute the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Program to provide incentives to local developers to undertake affordable housing initiatives
- Explore the implementation of insurance premium deductions for first-time homebuyers for an initial period
- Partner with the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, the Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital, the Roy Lester Schneider Hospital, and the Bureau of Economic Research to undertake a study to investigate the establishment of assisted-living facilities and senior citizen's homes

VETERAN'S AFFAIRS

- Obtain Veteran's Affairs medical certification for both hospitals so that veterans can receive medical services within the Virgin Islands
- Through the Workforce Investment Program, apply for available federal funding to initiate training programs for veterans to obtain skill development or retraining opportunities
- Involve the American Legion in the development of a strategic plan for veterans, particularly those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan
- Insure that the Veteran's Representative in the Department of Labor works with the Separation Office of the Armed Forces to identify upcoming or recently honorably discharged veterans to fill government vacancies in the Police Department, Fire Department, Department of Education, VITEMA, Bureau of Corrections, and Office of Homeland Security
- Restore the position of Assistant Director of Veteran's Affairs
- Adequately fund and remove the Veteran's Home/Land program from the Department of Housing, Parks and Recreation; and place it under the Office of Veterans Affairs
- Reprogram the \$350,000 previously encumbered to develop property located in the Botanical Garden area on St. Croix to purchase property more suitable for construction
- Extend creditable service to members of the Virgin Islands National Guard who have served at least eight years and allow their participation in the Veteran's Homestead Tax Exemption Program
- Assist the Veteran's Service Organization with the establishment of a military museum

TOGETHER We Can!

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