

# ACT NO. 9 0 0 6

BILL NO. 36-0090

## THIRTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

### Regular Session

2025

An act amending title 1 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 11 by adding section 200m to declare the week beginning the Monday before the first Friday in June as the Virgin Islands Gun Violence Awareness Week

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**WHEREAS**, gun violence continues to be a significant public health and safety issue in the Virgin Islands, with profound impacts on individuals, families, and communities at large; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 13, 2019, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature passed Bill No. 33-0126 establishing the Office of Gun Violence Prevention under the Office of the Governor.

**WHEREAS**, according to recent data, the Virgin Islands has experienced a disturbingly high rate of gun violence, with 43 homicides reported in 2024 alone, the majority of which involved firearms; and

**WHEREAS**, a study revealed that the average homicide rate in the Virgin Islands was approximately 37.4 per 100,000 residents per year between 1999 and 2014, significantly higher than many other Caribbean islands and U.S. cities; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2020, the Virgin Islands had a homicide rate nine times higher than the mainland United States emphasizing the severity of gun violence in the territory; and

**WHEREAS**, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that the Virgin Islands has one of the highest per capita rates of gun deaths in the United States, highlighting the urgent need for community-based interventions and awareness campaigns; and

**WHEREAS**, gun violence has long-lasting physical, emotional, and psychological effects on survivors and their families, contributing to trauma and a cycle of violence; and

**WHEREAS**, declaring a specific week dedicated to gun violence awareness provides an opportunity for residents, community organizations, and the local government to come together to address this critical issue and work towards solutions; and

**WHEREAS**, Virgin Islands Gun Violence Awareness Week will encourage educational activities, community discussions, and initiatives aimed at preventing gun violence and supporting affected individuals and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, promoting gun violence awareness aligns with the broader goals of enhancing public safety, fostering a sense of community, and improving the overall well-being of Virgin Islands residents; Now Therefore,

***Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:***

**SECTION 1.** Title 1, Virgin Islands Code, chapter 11 is amended by adding the following section 200m:

**§ 200m.** Virgin Islands Gun Violence Awareness Week

(a) The week beginning the Monday before the first Friday in June is designated as “Virgin Islands Gun Violence Awareness Week” in alignment with annual National Gun Violence Awareness Day. Virgin Islands Gun Violence Awareness Week is an observance and not a holiday.

(b) Virgin Islands Gun Violence Awareness Week shall be observed as a week to raise awareness about gun violence, to honor and to remember victims and survivors of gun violence, and to promote efforts to reduce gun violence in our communities.

Thus passed by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands on June 27, 2025.

Witness our Hands and Seal of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands this 30<sup>th</sup> day of June, A.D., 2025.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Milton E. Potter".

Milton E. Potter  
President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Avery L. Lewis".

Avery L. Lewis  
Secretary



**Bill No. 36- 0090 is hereby approved.**

**Witness my hand and the Seal of the Government of  
the United States Virgin Islands at Charlotte Amalie,  
St. Thomas, this 9<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025 A.D.**

  
**Albert Bryan Jr.  
Governor**