

RESOLUTION NO. 1921

BILL NO. 36-0203

THIRTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Regular Session

2025

A resolution petitioning the Congress of the United States to amend federal law to include the Virgin Islands as full participants in the Affordable Care Act

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WHEREAS, the federal government of the United States has entered a shutdown due to disagreements in Congress over spending priorities, particularly the extension of health-care subsidies and tax credits under the Affordable Care Act (“ACA”); and

WHEREAS, this shutdown underscores the fundamental importance of affordable health care and the critical role that subsidies and tax credits play in ensuring that citizens and residents across the nation have access to necessary medical coverage; and

WHEREAS, the irony of the current situation is that, while the federal government is paralyzed over policies related to the continuation of health-care benefits for Americans, the Virgin Islands and other U.S. territories are not fully included in or eligible for those same benefits under the ACA; and

WHEREAS, further compounding this irony is the fact that the federal government shutdown stemming from disputes over programs from which the Virgin Islands are excluded, disrupts and delays essential federal services and funding upon which the territory depends; and

WHEREAS, this inequitable arrangement results in Virgin Islanders being adversely affected by federal policy decisions and shutdowns tied to programs they cannot benefit from, illustrating the urgent need for comprehensive inclusion in national health care initiatives; and

WHEREAS, Virgin Islanders are American citizens who, despite their citizenship, remain excluded from the full participation in the nation's health reform law, including access to health insurance marketplaces, premium tax credits, and cost-sharing reductions available to residents of the fifty states and the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, Virgin Islands residents proudly serve in uniform at rates comparable to or above many states, contributing to the defense and security of the United States through the Armed Forces and the Virgin Islands National Guard, yet remain excluded from certain federal benefits and protections, including those provided under the ACA; and

WHEREAS, the Virgin Islands also hosts U.S. military personnel and operations as part of a multi-service anti-drug and counter-narcotics mission in the Caribbean, demonstrating the Territory's strategic importance to national security and its integral role in protecting the nation's borders and combating transnational crime; and

WHEREAS, this exclusion has contributed to disproportionately higher rates of uninsured individuals, limited access to affordable health insurance options, and greater financial barriers to care for Virgin Islands residents; and

WHEREAS, without access to premium tax credits or cost-sharing reductions, health insurance coverage is often unaffordable for working families; and

WHEREAS, the Government of the Virgin Islands must shoulder a disproportionate share of the cost for public health programs due to limited federal funding and capped Medicaid allocations, unlike states that receive open-ended federal matching support; and

WHEREAS, this inequity leads to delayed care, adverse health outcomes, and higher uncompensated care costs for hospitals and the local government; and

WHEREAS, inclusion under the ACA would stabilize the Virgin Islands' health care system, improve health outcomes, expand access to preventive services, and reduce the strain on public health resources; and

WHEREAS, equitable inclusion would also promote economic stability by fostering a healthier population, increased workforce productivity, reducing uncompensated care costs for the territorial hospitals, attracting greater investment in the territory's health sector, and alleviating local fiscal pressure; and

WHEREAS, extending ACA eligibility to the Virgin Islands would align with the principles of fairness, equality, and full citizenship for all Americans, ensuring that residents of the Virgin Islands are not left behind in national health care policy; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the Virgin Islands recognizes that the ongoing exclusion of the territory from the ACA is inconsistent with the federal government's stated commitment to equity and inclusion across U.S. jurisdictions; Now, Therefore,

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:

SECTION 1. The Legislature of the Virgin Islands petitions the Congress of the United States to amend federal law to include the Virgin Islands as full participants in the Affordable Care Act, with access to the same subsidies, tax credits, and marketplace options available to residents of the fifty states and the District of Columbia.

SECTION 2. The Legislature of the Virgin Islands urges the President of the United States and the United States Department of Health and Human Services to take all administrative and legislative actions necessary to ensure equitable treatment for the residents of the Virgin Islands in all federal health programs.

SECTION 3. The President of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands shall forward certified copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, the Virgin Islands Delegate to Congress, and the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Thus passed by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands on October 30, 2025.

Witness our Hands and Seal of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands this 31st day of October, A.D., 2025.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Milton E. Potter".

Milton E. Potter
President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ayery L. Lewis".

Ayery L. Lewis
Secretary