

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HOSPITALS
AND HUMAN SERVICES

12/2/15-AMENDED AND REPORTED OUT TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY

BILL NO. 31-0188

Thirty-first Legislature of the Virgin Islands

September 9, 2015

An Act amending Title 19 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 58 to establish the Virgin Islands Blood Donation Program

PROPOSED BY: Senators Kurt A. Vialet and Marvin A. Blyden
Co Sponsors: Justin Harrigan, Sr. and Novelle E. Francis, Jr.

1 **WHEREAS**, blood is essential for life; and

2 **WHEREAS**, blood transfusions save lives; and

3 **WHEREAS**, one out of every three people will need a blood transfusion in his or
4 her lifetime; and

5 **WHEREAS**, the blood donation of one person can save the lives of as many as
6 three people in need; and

7 **WHEREAS**, if not personally in need, everyone will have a friend, neighbor,
8 family member, or co-worker who needs a blood transfusion; and

9 **WHEREAS**, blood transfusions are essential for the treatment of cancer, heart and
10 blood vessel diseases, organ and marrow transplants, blood disorders including but not
11 limited to anemia, hemophilia, thalassemia, and sickle cell anemia, complicated
12 pregnancies, and emergencies, such as car accidents, and other accidents which cause
13 substantial blood loss, as well as burns; and

1 **WHEREAS**, while demand for blood is constant, blood supply is limited; and

2 **WHEREAS**, regular blood donations by a sufficient number of healthy people is
3 necessary to ensure that ample safe blood is available whenever needed; and

4 **WHEREAS**, in addition to saving lives, blood donors can benefit from free blood
5 analysis, reduced calorie absorption, reduce risk of heart attack, stroke and cancer;

6 Now,Therefore,

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

8 **SECTION 1.** This Act may be cited as the Virgin Islands Employee Blood Donor
9 Act.

10 **SECTION 2.** Title 19 Chapter 58 is amended by adding the §1604 to read as
11 follows:

12 “§1604. (a) The Commissioner of Health shall promulgate regulations to
13 implement an Employee Blood Donation Program that provides for participants to receive
14 time off from their employment to donate blood, as provided in subsection (d).

15 (b) Only fulltime employees who are employed by the employers identified in
16 subsection (b), are at least 18 years of age, and meet the health and other criteria established
17 by the Department of Health are eligible to participate in the Employee Blood Donor
18 Program under this section.

19 (c) The Employee Blood Donor Program operates during the operating hours
20 of the blood bank.

21 (d) Employees of the Government of the Virgin Islands and those private-sector
22 employees employed by beneficiaries of either the Economic Development Program or Act
23 No. 4740 are entitled to a maximum of three hours leave once every two months, without
24 loss of pay, or any other benefit, to allow the employee time to donate blood.

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1 (e) Employers and employees shall cooperate to establish mutually acceptable
2 schedules that permit employee participation in the Program to the fullest extent possible
3 while maintaining adequate staffing levels in the workplace.

4 (f) Employees who participate in the Blood Donation Program shall submit to
5 their employers documented proof confirming their participation at the time and on the
6 date for which they received leave.”

7 **BILL SUMMARY**

8 This bill amends title 19 chapter 58 Virgin Islands Code to establish the Virgin
9 Islands Employee Blood Donation Program and directs the Commissioner of Health to
10 promulgate regulations to implement the program. It also provides a mechanism by which
11 employees will receive leave to participate without negatively affecting their workplace.

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14 **BR15-0879/August 12, 2015/LHM**

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