

Kristen Cox
One Campus Group, Co-Chair
Testimony for H. R. 53
July 9, 2007

June 26, 2007

Good Evening:

To The U. S. House of Representatives on the Committee on Natural Resources,
Delegate to Congress Donna M. Christensen, and Members of the panel.

I am, Kristen Cox, Co-Chair person of the One Campus Group on St John, I am a mother, an aunt, a cousin, a friend, and I am someone who cares about our children and the future of our community and opportunity for the local residents of St John.

I am here before you today to testify why St John needs a new K through 12 School on St John.

The Fourteen years that I have been residing on St John I have watched the schools become deplorable. I have also heard, read and have been told that our local Government has been involved in ongoing negotiations to work on finding a location and obtaining land to build a new public school for the community of St John.

The conditions our children are being taught and the intrusive environment that our teaching staff has surrendered to noise pollution and dilapidating unsafe conditions of our buildings is simply unjust. We have made due with what we have because we have not had a choice in the matter. It is time the Virgin Islands Department of Education is held accountable for the lack of follow through and responsibility to our local Government to make sure our schools are safe and comfortable for our children, staff and the community.

I am asking for your panel to bring this bill forth in the House of Representatives. The Virgin Islands National Park signing a lease with the Virgin Islands Government to obtain and be part of a Team network, building a new state of the art K through 12 school with a vocational center that will be utilized by the children of St John, Community organizations and offer opportunities for any persons wanting to further their education.

We want to assist and/or provide through this complex and incorporate the National Park Service in Educating and mentoring the St John children, our community and tourists from abroad.

We live in the 21st Century and our children need to be technologically competitive in this growing world we live in. Unless ALL of our children are born naturally A+ students that excel in every subject, while attending grades K through 12, the rate we are going the U. S. Virgin Islands will revert to adult functional Illiteracy. Our children are being left

behind and are continuing to regress and the community is now becoming filled with delinquents and criminals because they are not being educated at a competitive level as the Iowa test results demonstrate each year as does our drop out rate.

The island of St. John resident children are about 1,000 students +/- divided up between public and private schools in grades K through 12. Our drop out rate is increasing yearly as is our crime rate and our homicide rate of ages 16 through 25. The poverty and low income level residents and our population is growing. We need change and the foundation for any change begins with education.

We have an opportunity to change history and make the difference we have been waiting for. The One Campus Group wants to work together to accomplish a common goal of well educated students for a positive future, join hands with those who have, will and want to make a difference in the future of; the National Park Service of the U. S. Virgin Islands, Friends of the National Park of the Virgin Islands, The Rockefeller Foundation, The Jackson Hole Preserve, the Government of the Virgin Islands, the Department of Education of the Virgin Islands and incorporate the following in a State of the Art Education Complex far superior to any other in the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean abroad.

My Vision of what St John's future School needs are as follows:

1. 3 Separate buildings on One Campus for Elementary, Middle and High school.
*Computers in each class room (1 for each student) OR each building be equipped with a Computer Lab.
2. One central Library
3. Athletic Park with Ball field (base ball, Track & Field, Soccer, Football, etc), Swimming pool, Basket ball court, Tennis court, Gymnastics, Gym with exercise equipment, etc.
4. A Vocational Learning Center that combines existing facilities elsewhere in the United States with the skills of teachers, researchers and the National Park Service to educate and share information on: marine biology, ecology, farming, science, communications, business management, wood working, auto mechanics and restoration, port authority, coast guard, EMT, FEMA, Red Cross, public works, etc.

I know we can work together and will be successful as a team and No Child will be Left Behind. Refer to: Exhibit A, Exhibit B, Exhibit C, Exhibit D, Exhibit E and Exhibit F why we can start building our new future together today.

I hope that you will push this bill through the House of Representatives so this Lease can be procured and remember we leave **No Child Behind**.

Thank you for your time.
Kristen Cox