IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

FILED
February 26, 2024 10:20 PM
ST-2024-CV-00129
TAMARA CHARLES
CLERK OF THE COURT

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
DIVISION OF ST. THOMAS AND ST. JOHN

DENE DESSUIT, Plaintiff, vs. LEGISLATURE OF THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS/ 34th LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS, and STEVEN PAYNE, MARISEL CASTOR and DONNA FRETT-GREGORY, in their official and individual capacities, Defendants.	Case No. ST-2024-cv- ACTION FOR DAMAGES **JURY TRIAL DEMANDED**

VERIFIED COMPLAINT

COMES NOW Plaintiff Dene Dessuit, by and through her undersigned counsels, CLAUDETTE V. FERRON, Esquire and the Law Offices of Kerry E. Drue, and for her Complaint against the above-named Defendants, individually, jointly and/or severally, assert the following:

Jurisdiction and Venue

1. This suit seeks monetary compensation for injuries, losses and other damages directly and proximately caused by the negligence, recklessness and wrongful conduct of the Legislature and above-named Virgin Islands Government employees.

2. This Court has personal jurisdiction and subject matter jurisdiction over this case pursuant to 4 V.I.C. §76, common law and the Virgin Islands Tort Claims Act. Plaintiff has timely complied with the dictates of said Act.

3. Venue is proper in the Division of St. Thomas-St. John since the torts, adverse employment action, omissions and other events giving rise to the claims at issue in this lawsuit occurred on the island of St. Thomas in the Territory of the U. S. Virgin Islands. Certain torts also occurred on the island of St. Croix in the Territory of the U. S. Virgin Islands.

Parties

4. Plaintiff is a young (20-something) adult female citizen of the United States. At all times material herein, Plaintiff was an employee of Defendant Legislature of the U. S. Virgin Islands (34th Legislature), domiciled in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

5. Defendant Legislature of the U. S. Virgin Islands/34th Legislature of the Virgin Islands is the legislative branch of the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands and a public institution located on St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. The Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands (GVI) is the duly constituted government of the unincorporated territory of the United States Virgin Islands. It has statutorily waived its sovereign immunity from tort suits such as this lawsuit and therefore, the Legislature has the capacity to be sued.

6. Defendant Steven Payne (hereinafter Defendant or Senator) is an adult male resident and citizen of the United States Virgin Islands. At all times material herein, Steven Payne was the elected At-Large Senator, domiciled in St. John.

7. At all times material herein, Defendant Marisel Castor was employed by Defendant Legislature of the U. S. Virgin Islands as its Assistant Executive Director and domiciled in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

8. At all times material herein, Defendant Donna Frett Gregory was an elected Senator representing the District of St. Thomas-St. John. She also served as the President of the 34th Legislature.

General Facts Giving Rise to Claims

9. On January 19, 2021, Plaintiff Dene Dessuit commenced a new position at the Legislature with Senator Steven Payne's Office.

10. Approximately three (3) weeks later, Defendant Senator Payne called Plaintiff on her cell phone, on the weekend, and told her it was a pleasure having her work in his office, and within six

months, if she continued to work as hard as she was working, he could see her promoted into a new position.

11. Plaintiff thought that Defendant's telephone call was odd but was unsure whether was irregular since she had not worked for Defendant Payne before. She ultimately dismissed the call as meaningless.

12. By April 2021, Defendant Payne started commenting on Plaintiff's appearance, stating something to the effect, "You could become a model and had you ever looked into modeling or anything of that sort."

13. In August 2021, Defendant Payne held a meeting attended by Chief of Staff Diane Hazelwood, Plaintiff's co-worker Shermal Smith and Plaintiff. In that meeting, Defendant Payne started yelling at Plaintiff, accusing her of causing him to attend a committee meeting that he was not a member of. Defendant Payne then accused accused Plaintiff of being involved with the legislative maintenance worker whom he saw talking to Plaintiff while he cleaned their office. He claimed that the legislative maintenance worker was causing me to slack off.

14. Plaintiff cried as she explained that she did not place the committee meeting on his schedule and she is not involved with the maintenance worker. Senator Payne then asked who put the meeting on his schedule. The Chief of Staff answered that it was her. Senator Payne then announced that if Plaintiff does anything wrong, she'll be suspended, not once, but twice. Senator Payne added that Plaintiff is not allowed to quit.

15. Senator Payne further stated that if Plaintiff tries to quit, he will handcuff her to the desk. Plaintiff was shocked by his statement and found it offensive.

16. Senator Payne's abusive conduct caused Plaintiff see a therapist. She disclosed what was happening at work. When Defendant Payne repeated his (mis)conduct, Plaintiff sought advice from her therapist.

17. In August 2021, due to the Covid pandemic, Plaintiff's female coworker was working from

home because her children were attending school online. Thus, only Plaintiff and a male coworker were on the job site; he worked mostly in his private office.

18. During this time, Defendant Payne, a tall man who is approximately 6 feet, 3 inches, would call Plaintiff into his office and order her to stand on a table, stretch to reach up and turn on the TV. Plaintiff often wore dresses and skirts and Defendant Payne would sit at his desk and stare at Plaintiff.

19. In October 2021, Plaintiff informed Chief of Staff Hazelwood that she had to have minor surgery. Ms. Hazelwood reported that disclosure to Defendant Payne. Defendant Payne called a meeting with both women.

20. During that meeting, Defendant Payne told Plaintiff she should not have the procedure done in the Virgin Islands but in Florida, at the Cleveland Clinic. He also said that if he had known sooner that Plaintiff needed surgery, he would have taken Plaintiff with him when he went to visit a family member in Florida recently. Plaintiff was shocked by what Defendant said and just froze.

21. The next month, when Plaintiff was alone in the office, Defendant Payne would approach her desk, stand beside her, say "I love you," and start blowing kissy faces in the air, making kissing noises with his mouth. This behavior shocked Plaintiff.

22. Plaintiff's job responsibility and duties included occasionally traveling to St. Croix with Defendant Payne to attend Committee meetings. On February 28, 2022, after the Committee meeting in the St. Croix Chamber, Chief of Staff Hazelwood was present with Senator Payne. Plaintiff told the Chief of Staff that she was hungry, assuming Ms. Hazelwood would take her to get something to eat. Ms. Hazelwood, however, told Plaintiff that Senator Payne would take Plaintiff to get dinner.

23. While Senator Payne drove Plaintiff to Pollo Tropical, Senator Payne asserted "You know we could just stay in the same room and save the Legislature money." This shocked Plaintiff and caused her to become extremely nervous.

24. Senator Payne repeated his suggestion that they stay in the same hotel room. Plaintiff remained silent and froze; she did not know what to say or do.

25. When they arrived at the King's Alley hotel, Senator Payne parked the Legislature's vehicle and offered to help Plaintiff carry her belongings. Plaintiff had a bag with food from Pollo Tropical, her clothing bag, and her work bag with her personal items with her. Senator Payne took Plaintiff's clothing bag and carried it to the hotel.

26. On information and belief, Senator Payne had been staying at the hotel from the previous Friday or Saturday.

27. Upon entering the hotel, Plaintiff walked to the front desk to check in and get her room key. She noticed that Senator Payne continued walking toward the stairs with her bag in his hand. Plaintiff called out to Senator Payne. He nonetheless continued making his way up the stairs with Plaintiff's bag. Plaintiff became alarmed.

28. When Plaintiff arrived at the staircase, Senator Payne was at the top of the first flight of stairs looking down at her and appeared to be waiting for her. Plaintiff told Senator Payne that her room was on another floor and she needed her bag. Senator Payne pretended not hear her and kept walking with her bag towards his room.

29. Although she was extremely scared, Plaintiff wanted to retrieve her bag and thought perhaps Senator Payne wanted to discuss the committee meeting.

30. At his room, Senator Payne opened the door, stood to the side, and, with hand gestures, instructed Plaintiff to go in, while still holding her bag in his hand. He then shut the door. Still terrified, Plaintiff began to silently pray; she did not know what else to do.

31. Senator Payne looked at Plaintiff and said, "Why are you staring at me? Get comfortable, that's your side of the bed over there." He then lifted the bed sheet, took out his gun, and placed the gun on the table as he watched Plaintiff.

32. When Plaintiff saw the gun, she immediately reacted, deciding to take her chance to get out of the room. As Senator Payne put down her clothing bag, she grabbed it and rushed to the door. The door was double-locked. She pulled at the door, trying to open it. Senator Payne walked over to her

and placed his room key in her hand. He told Plaintiff that she was pulling the door wrong. After a couple pulls, Plaintiff got the door unlatched and left.

33. When Plaintiff got to her hotel room, she called her coworker, Kalima King, and told her everything that happened. These ladies often spoke about the toxic work environment in the office and Senator Payne's inappropriate behavior.

34. While Plaintiff spoke with Ms. King on the phone, Senator Payne called Plaintiff and told her that, "When [Plaintiff] needs to come back to [his] room to make sure that she latched back the door." Plaintiff immediately hung up the phone.

35. Senator Payne called Plaintiff back two more times that night. Plaintiff did not answer those calls. At the time, she was on the phone with her sister.

36. Chief of Staff Hazelwood also called Plaintiff, claiming that she wanted to verify Plaintiff got to her room safely and everything was okay.

37. The next day, Plaintiff texted Senator Payne. Her text read: "Good morning, Senator, I saw that I missed your calls." Senator Payne replied, "You was snoring too loud, and [he]was glad that the jumbies didn't get you."

38. On the evening of Tuesday, March 1, 2022, Plaintiff returned to St. Thomas. Plaintiff continued to feel very uneasy and upset, so she notified Chief of Staff Hazelwood that she would be absent from the office the next day.

39. On March 4, 2022, Plaintiff had a conversation with Assistant Director for Human Resources Claudette Gordon. Plaintiff had confided in Ms. Gordon, but asked her not to say or do anything about Plaintiff's problems with Senator Payne because she feared retaliation.

40. On or about March 10, 2022, Plaintiff told Assistant Executive Director Marisel Castor about her experiences with Senator Payne, including what had happened in St. Croix. Expressing concern about retaliation, Plaintiff told Ms. Castor that she did not want anything done publicly at the time.

41. The next day, Ms. Castor told Plaintiff that they have a duty in the institution. Later that day, Ms. Castor called Plaintiff and asked her to come to her office. When Plaintiff asked Ms. Castor if she could bring her coworker, Ms. Castor responded "No," and stated she needed to talk to Plaintiff and tell her something.

42. In Ms. Castor's office, Ms. Castor informed Plaintiff that she posted notes of their conservation concerning Senator Payne on the calendar on her computer and that someone in management saw the notes. Plaintiff commented that she was unaware Ms. Castor was writing anything down. Plaintiff asked Ms. Castor who saw the notes. Ms. Castor refused to answer. Plaintiff began to cry because she realized that anyone who saw Ms. Castor's post could leak the information and inform Senator Payne.

43. Upset and scared, Plaintiff left Ms. Castor's office. Into the hallway, Plaintiff looked out the window and saw Senator Payne's car pulling into the driveway of the Legislature building. She became even more frightened. Plaintiff asked a coworker to take her home. Plaintiff also texted Chief of Staff Hazelwood and told her she was not feeling well.

44. The next day, Chief of Staff Hazelwood called Plaintiff and asked if she was pregnant. Plaintiff responded "no". Chief of Staff Hazelwood told Plaintiff to call her back when she is alone. When Plaintiff called Chief of Staff Hazelwood back, Chief of Staff Hazelwood kept asking: "Did Senator Payne do anything? Did he touch you? Did he yell at you?" Plaintiff told Chief of Staff Hazelwood that she just did not feel well and needed a couple of days to feel better.

45. When Plaintiff returned to work, she received a call from the Human Resources Director instructing her to attend a virtual meeting in an hour in the Executive Director's Office. About two (2) minutes before the meeting started, Assistant Executive Director Castor walked into Plaintiff's office and handed her a letter.

46. The letter informed Plaintiff was placed on administrative paid leave immediately and information regarding the situation would only be released confidentially on a "need to-know basis."

47. During the meeting, Director Edwards and James McNamara asked Plaintiff if she had any questions about the letter. Plaintiff asked if Senator Payne would receive a letter. Directors Edwards and McNamara answered, "Yes." Plaintiff told Directors Edwards and McNamara that she felt like her rights had been violated. Directors Edwards and McNamara responded that they were noting Plaintiff's concerns. Plaintiff asked what would happen after the investigation and both Directors told her they could not answer that question. Plaintiff then asked if she needed an attorney, and they said they could not answer that question either. Directors Edwards and McNamara told Plaintiff that she would be contacted by someone from their office to discuss the accusations.

48. Details regarding Plaintiff's complaint were leaked to the media. On April 7, 2022, information about Plaintiff's situation with Senator Payne was circulating in local newspapers. A Virgin Islands Consortium article recounted the incident at the hotel in St. Croix. This article also reported that the complainant was in her early twenties and was on administrative leave. Senate President Donna Frett Gregory confirmed the news story. Further, according to the news report, "multiple sources with knowledge" confirmed a sexual harassment complaint against Senator Payne by one of his employees.

49. As a result of this information being disseminated in the press, everyone working at the Legislature knew that the situation involved Plaintiff. Even though her name was not mentioned, Plaintiff's identity was revealed. In fact, since April 7, 2022, Plaintiff was called numerous times by Legislature employees asking if she is the accuser.

50. The Consortium News article stated that Legislature personnel had interviewed Senator Payne on the matter on March 23.

51. On the morning of March 25th, Senator Payne told Plaintiff that he could see her career blossoming soon in the coming months and see her moving on from his office. I sensed he know about my report of the February 28th incident. Later that morning, Plaintiff received the letter placing her on administrative leave effective immediately.

52. On April 7th, Legislative Director Kurnell Sheridan contacted Plaintiff to schedule a meeting for the next day. Legislative Director Sheridan also asked Plaintiff if she saw the media reports. Plaintiff said, "Yes," and Legislative Director Sheridan noted that they [the Legislature] cannot control those things.

53. Subsequently, Plaintiff was given a letter by her psychotherapist excusing her from participating in any work meetings or Legislature hearings because Plaintiff was experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

54. After the April 7th media reports, both Senator Payne and his Chief of Staff removed Plaintiff from all chats on the office's what's app. Then, on April 19th, the Chief of Staff removed Plaintiff from all office social media communications platforms.

55. On April 21, 2022, the V.I. Consortium news source published that according to two (2) sources in the Legislature, the sexual harassment matter regarding Plaintiff has been escalated to the Committee on Ethical Conduct.

56. In June, Plaintiff learned through the news media that Defendant Legislature decided to expel Defendant Senator Payne.

57. Plaintiff also learned that fellow staff members who worked for Senator Payne were offered reassignments with the interim Senator selected to replace Senator Payne. Defendant Legislature never offered Plaintiff a transfer or reassignment.

58. After the April 7th and other media reports, Defendant Payne has made appearances on the radio, TV as well as other written and electronic media accusing Plaintiff of lying and making false statements about him.

59. In August, in response to Plaintiff's counsels' inquiries, Senate President Frett Gregory informed that she shall remain on paid administrative leave until the official term of the 34th Legislature ends on January 9th.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

Assault

(Against Defendant Payne)

60. Plaintiff reaffirms, re-alleges and herein incorporates by reference, the allegations set forth in Paragraph 1 through Paragraph 59 and further states as follows:

61. Plaintiff endeavored to professionally and peacefully perform her work. Defendant Senator Payne's unprofessional, uninvited and inappropriate behavior towards Plaintiff, to wit: whispering in her ear; blowing kisses at her; compelling her to go to his hotel room to retrieve her luggage and then brandishing his gun while she was trapped therein, *inter alia,* were intended to cause Plaintiff to suffer apprehension of harmful contact and imminent, serious bodily harm. Plaintiff did fear for her immediate safety.

62. Plaintiff did not provoke or consent to such assault. Defendant knew his conduct was unwelcome.

63. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's wrongful conduct, Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer damages and losses, including but not limited to, economic losses, emotional distress, severe mental anguish, stress, humiliation, fright, and other damages for which Defendant is liable.

64. Plaintiff is entitled to compensation from Defendant for such injuries. Additionally, Plaintiff is entitled to an award of punitive damages in an amount not less than $25,000 because Defendant's actions were malicious, outrageous, wanton, reckless and callously disregarded Plaintiff's emotional well-being and physical safety.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

Breach of Peace

(Against Defendant Payne)

65. Plaintiff reaffirms, re-alleges and herein incorporates by reference, the allegations set forth

in Paragraph 1 through Paragraph 64 and further states as follows:

65. Plaintiff endeavored to work professionally and peacefully while on the premises of her job-site as well as at the locations she was required to be at due to obligatory business travel.

66. Defendant, however, engaged in a pattern of deliberate, threatening and wrongful actions to intimidate Plaintiff to submit to his sexual advances.

67. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's deliberate, threatening and wrongful actions, Plaintiff suffered great unease, discomfort, humiliation, fear for her safety, insomnia, mental anguish and other damages for which Defendant is liable.

68. Plaintiff is entitled to compensation in amounts to be proven at trial and an award of punitive damages from Defendant.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

False Imprisonment

(Against Defendant Payne)

69. Plaintiff reaffirms, re-alleges and herein incorporates by reference, the allegations set forth in Paragraph 1 through Paragraph 68 and further states as follows:

70. While on a business trip in St. Croix, Defendant tricked Plaintiff into entering his hotel room by wrongfully seizing her luggage, locked her in his hotel room, directed her to get comfortable, told her "that's your side of the bed over there" and brandished his gun.

71. Defendant intended to confine Plaintiff in his hotel room. He locked the hotel room door so that Plaintiff would be unable to leave. When he placed his gun on the table and put Plaintiff's bag down, Plaintiff grabbed her bag and tried to leave. Upon turning and repeatedly pulling the door, however, Plaintiff realized the hotel room door was double locked. Thus, Defendant's acts resulted in Plaintiff's confinement.

72. As the direct and proximate result of Defendant's wrongful acts, Plaintiff experienced

severe trauma and continues to suffer other damages and losses, including but not limited to, economic losses, emotional distress, heightened fear, severe mental anguish, stress and humiliation for which Defendant is liable.

73. Plaintiff is entitled to compensation from Defendant for such injuries. Additionally, Plaintiff is entitled to an award of punitive damages in an amount not less than $25,000 because Defendant's actions were malicious, outrageous, wanton, reckless and callously disregarded Plaintiff's emotional well-being and physical safety.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Defamation

(Against Defendant Payne)

74. Plaintiff reaffirms, re-alleges and herein incorporates by reference, the allegations set forth in Paragraph 1 through Paragraph 73 and further states as follows:

75. On April 7, 2022, details of Defendant's sexual harassment of Plaintiff were reported in newspapers of the Virgin Islands, the story having been leaked by Defendant Legislature. Since then, Defendant Payne has been giving public interviews and statements to the media- including television, radio, print, digital, and social media platforms- commenting on Plaintiff and her complaints of sexual harassment, retaliation, and assault.

76. In Defendant Payne's public interviews and statements to the media, he has stated that Plaintiff is a liar, that her statements about him were false and fabricated, and that Plaintiff is a woman of poor morals.

77. Defendant Payne's statements impugning the truthfulness and character of Plaintiff constitute slander. Defendant Payne's defamatory statements and accusations are not protected by any privilege- absolute, qualified, or otherwise.

78. Defendant Payne knowingly and intentionally engaged in the above-described conduct of

a malicious, oppressive, or fraudulent nature and knowingly published false statements of and concerning Plaintiff.

79. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's conduct, Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer damages and losses, including but not limited to, economic losses, emotional distress, severe mental anguish, stress, humiliation, fright, and other damages for which Defendant is liable. Plaintiff is entitled to compensation from Defendant for such injuries. Additionally, Plaintiff is entitled to an award of punitive damages in an amount not less than $25,000 because Defendant's actions were malicious, outrageous, wanton, reckless and callously disregarded Plaintiff's emotional well-being.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Invasion or Violation of Privacy/Intrusion Upon Seclusion

(Against all Defendants)

80. Plaintiff reaffirms, re-alleges and herein incorporates by reference, the allegations set forth in Paragraph 1 through Paragraph 79 and further states as follows:

81. After Plaintiff reported her traumatic experiences with Senator Payne to Assistant Executive Director Marisel Castor, Ms. Castor- without Plaintiff's knowledge- posted notes of their conversation on her computer. Ms. Castor placed those notes visibly on her computer even though sexual harassment complaints are to be treated with utmost confidentiality. Ms. Castor owed a duty of confidentiality, *inter alia,* to Plaintiff. Ms. Castor breached said duty and breached the Legislature's confidentiality policies, protections/duties which resulted in invasion of Plaintiff's privacy. Notably, during their meeting, Plaintiff did not see Assistant Executive Director Castor write, type or otherwise take any notes.

82. Ms. Castor notified Plaintiff that another employee saw her notes. Although said Assistant Executive Director apologized for her lack of diligence- thus acknowledging her negligence and

carelessness, she refused to reveal the identity of the other employee who read her notes. Plaintiff's complaint/situation was subsequently leaked to the media.

83. On April 7, 2022, The Virgin Islands Consortium- an internet/online newspaper, reported that multiple sources with knowledge of the situation confirmed that a sexual harassment complaint had been lodged against Senator Payne by a young staff member. (At the time, Plaintiff was the youngest employee there.) One of the sources with knowledge of the situation whom the media identified it spoke to was Senator Donna Frett Gregory. Defendant Payne also publicly made statements impugning the truthfulness and character of Plaintiff.

84. Confidential and identifying details about Plaintiff were disseminated territory-wide and nationally. As a result, Plaintiff was called numerous times by various Legislature employees asking if she is the accuser. On social media, members of the community claimed to know her identity.

85. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' conduct, Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer damages and losses, including but not limited to, economic losses, emotional distress, severe mental anguish, stress, humiliation, fright, and other damages for which Defendants are liable. Plaintiff is entitled to compensation from Defendants for such injuries.

SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress

(Against all Defendants)

86. Plaintiff reaffirms, re-alleges and herein incorporates by reference, the allegations set forth in Paragraph 1 through Paragraph 85 and further states as follows:

87. Defendants' acts constitute extreme and outrageous conduct that exceed the bounds of decency in an employment context. Such objectionable conduct was also extreme and outrageous by community standards.

88. The fright and trauma occasioned by Defendants' (mis)conduct made Plaintiff extremely

anxious, worried and nervous as well as caused Plaintiff to suffer emotional distress and psychological harm, including nightmares, to such an extent that Plaintiff had to receive and continues to receive psychotherapeutic and medical treatment and other related damages and losses for which Defendants are liable. Plaintiff is entitled to compensation for such injuries in amounts to be proven at trial.

SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Negligent Infliction of Emotional Distress

(Against all Defendants)

89. Plaintiff reaffirms, re-alleges and herein incorporates by reference, the allegations set forth in Paragraph 1 through Paragraph 88 and further states as follows:

90. Defendants negligently caused Plaintiff to suffer severe emotional distress when they mishandled Plaintiff's sexual harassment complaint by failing to treat the matter with the utmost care and confidentiality and deliberately leaked details about said complaint to the media/press.

91. At all times material herein, Defendants' acts and omissions violated Plaintiff's rights and interfered with Plaintiff's enjoyment of life. Accordingly, Plaintiff is entitled to be compensated from Defendants in amounts to be proven at trial.

EIGHTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Respondeat Superior Liability

92. Plaintiff reaffirms, realleges and incorporates by reference the allegations set forth above in Paragraph 1 through Paragraph 91 and further states as follows:

93. The actions of Defendants described previously were done while they were on-duty and during the course and scope of their employment. Each was acting as an agent, employee and representative of Defendant Legislature of the U. S. Virgin Islands/34th Legislature of the Virgin Islands and the other named Defendants. These Defendants breached their duties as described above. Their breaches and failures, having arisen out of job-related matters, are imputed to co-defendant Legislature

of the U. S. Virgin Islands/34th Legislature of the U. S. Virgin Islands under principles of *respondeat superior*, actual agency and apparent agency.

94. Since Defendant Legislature of the U. S. Virgin Islands/34th Legislature of the Virgin Islands was negligent through Defendants Assistant Executive Director Marisel Castor and Senate President Donna Frett Gregory, co-defendant Legislature of the U. S. Virgin Islands/34th Legislature of the Virgin Islands is vicariously or otherwise liable to Plaintiff for the injuries and damages she sustained arising from the acts complained of herein that were committed by these named Defendants, the amounts of which will be proven at trial.

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Plaintiff requests a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Dene Dessuit respectfully requests that this Honorable Court award her judgment for compensatory damages plus special/punitive damages for personal injury, mental anguish and other pain and suffering against Defendants jointly, severally, and/or individually in amounts to be proven at trial, plus award costs and attorney fees incurred in bringing this action, and award any other relief deemed appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: February 26, 2024

By: */ s / Claudette V. Ferron*

Claudette V. Ferron, Esq.
(*Pro Hac Vice)*
Principal & Managing Member
IRON ROCK LAW, PLLC.
1314 19th Street., NW.,
Washington, DC. 20036-1602
(202) 822-1720(Main)
(202) 822-1721(Fax)
(571) 595-6993(Mobile)

Respectfully submitted,

Date: February 26, 2024

By: */s/ Kerry E Drue*

Kerry E. Drue, Esq.
(V. I. Bar No. 545)
LAW OFFICES OF KERRY E. DRUE
P. O. Box 9566
St. Thomas, U.S.V.I. 00801-2566

Tele: (340) 777-DRUE (3783)

Email: Kdruelawfirm@earthlink

VERIFICATION

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA)
) ss:
COUNTY OF DAUPHIN)

I, Dene Dessuit, am the Plaintiff herein and have carefully read the foregoing Complaint and declare that the assertions set forth above are accurate, true and correct to the best of my personal knowledge, other information and recollection.

By: Dene Dessuit

I HEREBY CERTIFY that Dene Dessuit, personally appeared before me, an officer duly authorized to administer oaths and take acknowledgments, who is personally known to me or who has produced the following identification, Passport and who is described therein and who executed this Verified Complaint, and who acknowledged before me that she executed the same freely and voluntarily for the purposes stated therein.

SUBSCRIBED and SWORN before me on this 20th day of February, 2024.

Shavera Howard
Notary Public

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania - Notary Seal
SHAVERA HOWARD - Notary Public
Dauphin County
My Commission Expires October 4, 2026
Commission Number 1422533