

Legislature of the Virgin Islands



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The Honorable

Angel Bolques, Jr.

Senator-At-Large

36th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

CHAIRMAN

Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports & Parks

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Committee on Economic Development & Agriculture

MEMBER

Committee of the Whole

Committee on Rules & Judiciary

Committee on Homeland Security, Justice & Public Safety

Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure & Planning

Sub-Committee on Energy & Infrastructure Development

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Senator Bolques Honors Fireburn Queens on Contract Day Calls Fire Burn a Symbol of Cultural Resistance and Personal Purpose

U.S. Virgin Islands — Senator At Large, Angel L. Bolques Jr., commemorates Contract Day “October 1, 2025” by paying a powerful tribute to the revolutionary spirit of the Fireburn Queens—Mary “Queen Mary” Thomas, Mathilda “Queen Mathilda” McBean, and Axelline “Queen Agnes” Salomon —and reflects on how their courageous uprising continues to ignite both his advocacy and his identity as a cultural protector of the Virgin Islands.

"The fire they set was not just in cane fields. It was in the conscience of a people. It is the same fire that fuels my work today—standing for fairness, dignity, and the cultural rebirth of our islands," said Senator Bolques. The Fireburn revolt of 1878, led by three enslaved women turned warriors of justice, stands as one of the most defining moments in our labor history. On October 1—the day contracts were renewed under the oppressive 1849 Labor Act—our ancestors rose in flames of resistance, demanding the right to live with purpose, dignity, and fair pay.

As Chairman of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, and Parks, Senator Bolques views fire not as destruction, but as transformation—a symbol of memory, conviction, and the enduring will to confront oppression and forge justice from its ashes. "The Fireburn isn't just history—it's prophecy," Bolques said. "It lives in every wrong I work to right, every injustice I rise to challenge, and in the collective progress of all people I strive to uplift." "We are the keepers of the sacred 'Fire Burn' flame," he declared. "One that was lit by our ancestors who dared to burn injustice to the ground and build a legacy that still guides us today."

This Contract Day, Senator Bolques urges all Virgin Islanders to go beyond remembrance and take inspiration from the Fireburn:

- Educate the next generation on the power of protest and cultural pride
- Support local labor and artisans whose work uplifts community resilience
- Honor our past by building policy that reflects justice, equity, and empowerment

"Our flame must never go out. Let it burn brighter in our voices, in our laws, and in our love for these islands," Bolques concluded.

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