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SENATE

{ REPORT
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VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES CENTENNIAL COMMISSION ACT

AUGUST 30, 2016.—Ordered to be printed

Filed, under authority of the order of the Senate of July 14, 2016

Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 2615]

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which was referred the bill (H.R. 2615) to establish the Virgin Islands of the United States Centennial Commission, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment, and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE

The purpose of H.R. 2615 is to establish the Virgin Islands of the United States Centennial Commission.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

The transfer of the Virgin Islands from Denmark to the United States in 1917 was a significant historic and cultural event. H.R. 2615 creates a bipartisan federal commission that will develop, plan, and execute formal commemorative activities to honor the rich heritage of the U.S. Virgin Islands and celebrate the 100th anniversary of its status as a U.S. territory.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

H.R. 2615 was introduced on June 2, 2015, by Representative Plaskett (D-VI) and referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. On March 1, 2016, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform ordered H.R. 2615 favorably re-

ported, as amended, by voice vote. On April 26, 2016, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 2615 by voice vote.

On April 27, 2016, H.R. 2615 was received in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources met in open business session on July 13, 2016, and ordered H.R. 2615 favorably reported.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, in open business session on July 13, 2016, by a majority voice vote of a quorum present, recommends that the Senate pass H.R. 2615.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title

Section 1 designates the short title of the bill as the “Virgin Islands of the United States Centennial Commission Act.”

Section 2. Establishment

Section 2 establishes a Virgin Islands of the United States Centennial Commission (Commission).

Section 3. Duties of the Commission

Section 3 requires the Commission to plan and implement activities to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Virgin Islands of the United States (USVI) becoming an unincorporated territory of the United States, and provide advice and assistance to federal, state and local government agencies, and civic groups to carry out commemorative activities. This section further requires the Commission to submit reports to the President and Congress pursuant to section 7.

Section 4. Membership

The Commission is to be composed of eight members, including the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Affairs or a designee, one member appointed by the USVI Governor or a designee; two members of the U.S. House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House; one member of the House of Representatives appointed by the Minority Leader of the House; two members of the U.S. Senate appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate; and one member of the Senate appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate.

This section requires that members be appointed no later than 90 days after the date of the Act’s enactment and specifies that a vacancy shall not affect the powers of the Commission. Pursuant to this section, vacancies are to be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made, a majority of the members shall constitute a quorum to conduct business, and the chairperson of the Commission shall be selected by a majority vote of the members. Members shall not receive compensation for duties of the Commission, but shall be reimbursed for travel and per diem for duties of the Commission.

Section 5. Director and Staff of Commission

Section 5 requires the Commission to appoint an Executive Director and other personnel needed to enable the Commission to perform its duties. The personnel may be appointed without regard to the provisions governing appointments in the competitive service, and the rate of pay may not exceed level III of the Executive Schedule. The Commission may also hire experts and consultants and accept and use voluntary and uncompensated services.

Section 5 further authorizes the Secretary of the Interior or the Archivist of the United States to detail any personnel to assist the Commission to perform duties.

Section 6. Powers of the Commission

Section 6 allows the Commission to hold hearings, take testimony, and receive evidence the Commission determines appropriate to carry out this Act. The Commission may use the U.S. mail service in the same manner as other federal agencies, and at the request of the chairperson, may secure official federal agency information to perform the duties of the Commission.

This section permits the Commission to solicit, accept, and use gifts or donations of money, services, or property, both real and personal, to aid the work of the Commission. The Commission may enter into contracts with and compensate federal, state and local governments, and private entities. Upon request of the Commission, the Administrator of the Government Services Administration shall make available to the Commission, at the normal rental rate for federal agencies, assistance and facilities that may be needed for the Commission to perform its duties.

Section 7. Reports

Section 7 requires the Commission to submit an annual report to the President and the Congress on the activities, revenue, and expenditures of the Commission including a list of each gift with a value of more than \$250, along with the identity of the donor.

Section 8. Annual audit

Section 8 authorizes the Inspector General of the Department of the Interior to conduct an audit of the Commission.

Section 9. Definitions

Section 9 defines various terms in the Act.

Section 10. Termination

Section 10 requires the Commission to terminate no later than September 30, 2018.

Section 11. No additional funds authorized

Section 11 stipulates that no federal funds are authorized or may be obligated to carry out this Act.

COST AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The following estimate of costs of this measure has been provided by the Congressional Budget Office:

H.R. 2615—Virgin Islands of the United States Centennial Commission Act

H.R. 2615 would establish a commission to plan, develop, and coordinate the 100th anniversary of the U.S. Virgin Islands becoming an unincorporated territory of the United States. The eight commission members would serve without pay but would be reimbursed for travel expenses. The commission would be authorized to hire staff and could use the employees and services of the Department of the Interior and the National Archives on a reimbursable basis. Under the legislation the commission could spend gifts and contributions to cover its costs, but the use of appropriated funds would be prohibited. The commission would terminate by September 30, 2018.

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 2615 would have no significant net effect on the federal budget. The legislation would affect direct spending because it would authorize the commission to accept and spend monetary gifts. Therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. However, CBO estimates that the net effect on direct spending would be negligible. Enacting H.R. 2615 would not affect revenues.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 2615 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2027.

H.R. 2615 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

On March 18, 2016, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 2615, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on March 1, 2016. The two versions of the legislation and CBO's estimates of their budgetary effects are the same.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Matthew Pickford. The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

REGULATORY IMPACT EVALUATION

In compliance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee makes the following evaluation of the regulatory impact which would be incurred in carrying out H.R. 2615. The bill is not a regulatory measure in the sense of imposing Government-established standards or significant economic responsibilities on private individuals and businesses.

No personal information would be collected in administering the program. Therefore, there would be no impact on personal privacy.

Little, if any, additional paperwork would result from the enactment of H.R. 2615, as ordered reported.

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING

H.R. 2615, as ordered reported, does not contain any congressionally directed spending items, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee notes that no changes in existing law are made by the bill as ordered reported.

