

Philippines Flood Control Corruption

Many Filipinos are not deeply familiar with the law, and as a result, many simply speculate based on whatever information is fed to them. But what is the truth behind all the Senate and House investigations that are showcased in public? These two chambers often have different views and, at times, conflicting interests.

This article only reflects my point of view. My goal is to explain what is happening and why.

The Discaya Revelations

On September 1, 2025, the first Blue Ribbon hearing ended with several contractors refusing to reveal what they knew — who was the most guilty, who the mastermind was. Was it the contractors themselves? The DPWH? Were senators or members of Congress involved?

Among them were Ms. Discaya and

Wawao Builders’ Mr. Arevalo — *who said,*
“*I invoke my right against self-incrimination*” — *couldn’t face the*
senators □.”.

The Senate Blue Ribbon Committee announced that anyone who testifies under oath to reveal their knowledge of the corruption may be considered for application as a state witness, in order to protect them.

On **September 8, 2025**, during the second hearing, the Discayas publicly revealed what they claimed was personal knowledge of corruption and possible masterminds behind flood control projects. In exchange, they sought to be considered as **state witnesses**. They named high-profile figures, including **House Representative Zaldy Co** and **House Speaker Martin Romualdez**.

Mr. Discaya declared:

“Mas gugustuhin namin maging kaaway ang mga taong pinangalanan namin kaysa sa 120k na Pilipino.”

He also mentioned that he feared for his family’s safety.

Mentioning such names could endanger their lives, which is why they applied for state witness status. However, **being a state witness does not mean one is automatically “forgiven.”** Philippine law — Rule 119, Section 17 of the Rules of Court and RA 6981 (Witness Protection, Security, and Benefit Act) — sets strict requirements:

- A state witness **must not be the most guilty**.
- Their testimony must be indispensable in proving the case.
- They must be formally discharged as an accused by the court and, if accepted, may be placed under **Witness Protection**, which provides security and benefits.

Thus, it is the **DOJ**, not the Senate, that decides on their acceptance. **It does not erase all liability** — it only provides immunity in the specific case where they testify.

Senator **Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa** even suggested that the Discayas use a bulletproof vehicle until their state witness application is resolved.

However, that same evening, Senate leadership shifted. **Senator Vicente “Tito” Sotto III** was elected Senate President following the controversy. Soon after, the Discayas’ application for state witness status was **rejected**.

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STATEMENT OF SENATE PRESIDENT VICENTE SOTTO III

Hindi naman puwedeng makakuha sila ng proteksyon ng gobyerno pero ang dami nilang nakuhang pera ng bayan. Unfair sa mga kababayan natin 'yon.

Ang kailangan para maging state witness ka, ibalik mo ang ninakaw mo, magsabi ka ng totoo. Iba ang sinabi sa Senado, iba ang sinabi sa House.

Sabi nga ni Mayor Vico Sotto, sinungaling sila. Hindi gano'n kadali ang hiling nila.

September 10, 2025

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Under **Rule 119, Section 17 of the Rules of Court**, and **Republic Act №6981** (Witness Protection, Security, and Benefit Act) blah blah blah!!

There is no such rule that says '*ibalik muna*'. This makes me think that Sotto is incapable of making such decision. Don't worry — the money and assets will surely be recovered by the government, It is mandatory not a requirements.

It is also crucial to understand that entry into the Witness Protection Program is not a pardon. Its sole purpose is to protect individuals from the syndicate they have exposed; without such protection, contractors would be unlikely to come forward. After the trial, the court will still render a final judgment on any offenses. While cooperation may result in reduced penalties, that decision rests entirely with the justice system.□

Following the event **Hon. Rodante Marcoleta was forced to step down as chairman of the Blue Ribbon Committee**. He questioned the new Senate President, warning that the handling of contractors and the state witness program could be compromised — raising doubts about the Senate's integrity. With this turn of events, will the remaining contractors still have the courage to speak up?

The Brice Hernandez Case

Following the Senate hearing, House Speaker **Romualdez** asked the new Senate President, **Sotto**, to turn over **Brice Hernandez** to Congress for their own investigation.

In Congress, Brice Hernandez escalated matters by claiming that even senators, specifically **Jinggoy Estrada** and **Joel Villanueva**, were involved in the corruption scheme.

Brice Hernandez said:

“Akala niya ligtas na sya” to Senator Jinggoy Estrada

He also said his life would be in danger if he remained under Senate custody.

Public opinion was divided: some believed Hernandez’s claims, while others saw them as a script planted by Congress.

Later, Congress Chairman **Ridon** suggested considering Hernandez as a state witness. (Despite his questionable record and alleged misuse of millions in taxpayers’ money through gambling. □)

Hon. Marculeta and Senator **Bato Dela Rosa** questioned Senate President Sotto's actions regarding handling Hernandez to the congress without notifying the Senate team,

explaining that in past events, Congress had detained suspects in contempt and allegedly planted evidence or scripted testimonies in exchange for favors.

For this reason, they decided to place Hernandez in **jail**, rather than in Senate or House custody.

On **September 10, 2025**, **Mr. Brice Hernandez** was officially jailed, not placed under the custody of either the Senate or Congress. His detention drew public sympathy and debate. Many questioned why he was behind bars while his superior, **Mr. Alcantara**, was not.

The difference, as explained in hearings, was that **Alcantara cooperated and admitted some liability**, while Hernandez faced **strong evidence of unexplained wealth** — luxury cars, motorcycles, and millions of pesos allegedly **spent on casino gambling**. The Senate Blue Ribbon Committee **presented photos from casinos showing Hernandez using fake LTO IDs**.

When pressed by Senator Jinggoy Estrada, who warned:

“Give me a good reason why I should not cite you in contempt. Because if your reason is unacceptable to all of us here, we will be forced to cite you in contempt”

— **This is during the Senate hearing held prior to the Congress hearing** — Hernandez gave weak responses, denied the evidence presented, and failed to provide a valid explanation. As a result, he was cited in contempt of the Senate.

Important clarification: Being cited in contempt is **not a criminal conviction**. It only means the Senate can detain a witness for refusing to cooperate or obstructing proceedings. Any actual criminal liability will still be decided by the **DOJ and the courts** after a full investigation.

The primary purpose of citing someone in contempt is to **compel them to testify, produce documents, or behave properly during a hearing**. It is a **coercive tool, not a punitive one in the criminal sense**.

Now, Congress appears to be targeting Senators **Jinggoy Estrada** and **Joel Villanueva**. In my view, this move could be politically motivated: if Estrada and Villanueva are weakened or removed, the **Senate minority bloc loses strength**, thereby consolidating the power of the new Senate President, **Tito Sotto**.

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This is my opinion only as of September 12, 2025. Let's see what will happen next.

Feel free to comment and share your views too.