

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Attorney General Says He's Not Aware Of Any Corruption Within Mapp Administration

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Ernice Gilbert **October 09, 2015**



ST. THOMAS -- The territory's Acting Attorney General at a confirmation hearing here on Thursday told senators sitting on the Committee on Rules and Judiciary that he is not aware of any corruption in the Governor Kenneth Mapp administration.

Claude E. Walker, Mapp's latest pick for the Department of Justice, was responding to a question posed by freshman Sen. Novelle Francis.

"How are you able to separate the individual who appointed you to this position, take fresh eyes and look at corruption that may very well be going on within this government and use that same energy to pursue and ensure that those cases are investigated?"

asked Francis.

Although Walker was swift in stating that he did not know of any corruption within the current administration, he suggested that if his office were to become privy of any such behavior, he would be required by the territory's laws to take necessary action.

"I'm not aware of any corruption in the present government, but what I can tell you is I'm bound by the rules of professional conduct," Walker, who ignited heated debate throughout the territory when he announced the arrest of Governor John P. de Jongh in August, said. A video The Consortium posted of the announcement [has been watched](#) by more than 51,000 people.

"The Virgin Islands Supreme Court grants me a law license and I have to conduct myself in a certain way or I lose my license and won't be able to earn a living. So there are specific rules as to the ethical behavior of an attorney and I have to comply with those rules first and foremost," Walker added.

Francis also asked Walker if he would pursue companies like the West Indian Company (WICO) with the same energy and passion that he has expressed in going after firms like HOVENSA. However, Walker said he was not sure why he should go after WICO when he remains unaware of any wrongdoing, and that it would be "inappropriate for me to say that we're targeting WICO without having formal information."

The question of corruption within the Mapp administration are mostly based on the governor's recent actions as it relates to spending and possible misconduct by WICO board members in regards to the governor's former rental home at Estate Nazareth. The questions are also pertinent because de Jongh -- arrested on two counts of embezzlement of public monies and neglecting to pay over public monies in violation of Virgin Islands criminal code -- faced similar housing problems as governor.