

Golfing with Trump: Analysis Reveals Powerful Elite Can Literally Play for Access

"No theory of ethical governance could justify this."

By [Andrea Germanos](#)

Global Research, September 07, 2017

[Common Dreams](#) 6 September 2017

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

Featured image: *The Trump National Golf Club in Los Angeles.* (Photo: [Yuki Shimazu/flickr/cc](#))

A new [USA TODAY investigation](#) reveals that top executives, lobbyists, and contractors are buying access to President Donald Trump through memberships at the president's numerous golf clubs, adding further concerns about the administration's ethical conflicts.

Reacting to the story, one observer [wrote](#) on Twitter:

"In the developing world, this is called corruption."

Membership lists of Trump's golf clubs are not publicly available, so *USA TODAY* tracked the names down through social media posts, news stories, and records on the U.S. Golf Association website, which show players' handicaps and scores.

With those records, the news outlet found 4,500 names. Prioritizing the clubs where Trump has spent the most time since taking office—in New Jersey, Virginia, and Florida—the reporting found "at least 50 executives whose companies hold federal contracts and 21 lobbyists and trade group officials. Two-thirds played on one of the 58 days the president was there," the reporting found. It further shows

that, for the first time in U.S. history, wealthy people with interests before the government have a chance for close and confidential access to the president as a result of payments that enrich him personally. It is a view of the president available to few other Americans.

Listed among the ranks of the membership

are top executives of defense contractors, a lobbyist for the South Korean government, a lawyer helping Saudi Arabia fight claims over the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, and the leader of a pesticide trade group that sought successfully to persuade the Trump administration not to ban an insecticide government scientists linked to health risks.

"No theory of ethical governance could justify this," [tweeted](#) **Walter Shaub**, who [resigned](#) as Office of Government Ethics (OGE) Director in July following ethics battles

with the Trump White House.

Shaub was also quoted in the *USA TODAY* article, saying,

“Face time is everything when it comes to Washington,” adding, “The president bopping around his properties gives them access to him.”

(It should also be noted that members’ club initiation fees, which can be upwards of \$100,000, personally profit Trump, as *McClatchy* [reported](#) in July.)

USA TODAY also notes an exchange that took place in February between Trump and an airline industry lobbyist who appeared to tout his membership at one of the president’s golf clubs..

As *Quartz* [reported](#) at the time, **Kevin M. Burke**, president and CEO of Airports Council International-North America, said to Trump at a White House gathering,

“I’m a member of your club, by the way.”

Trump responded by saying,

“Very good, very good.”

“It’s not a quid pro quo, but it’s one step away from a suggestion of an exchange,” said **Norman Eisen**, a former Obama administration ethics official, to Quartz. “It’s part of a larger pattern, that is part of a bigger picture.”

The new investigation [follows](#) the launch of a new Public Citizen report, “President Trump Inc.,” which spotlights his “for-profit presidency” with an interactive map that documents the tangled web of his vast business interests.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License

The original source of this article is [Common Dreams](#)
Copyright © [Andrea Germanos](#), [Common Dreams](#), 2017

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Andrea Germanos](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants

permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca