Using Empirical Data to Investigate the Original Meaning of Emolument in the Constitution

Available at: www.clarkcunningham.org/MeaningOfEmolument.html

Clark D. Cunningham
W. Lee Burge Chair in Law & Ethics
Georgia State University College of Law
cdcunningham@gsu.edu www.clarkcunningham.org

Jesse Egbert
Assistant Professor, Applied Linguistics
Northern Arizona University
jesse.egbert@nau.edu
http://oak.ucc.nau.edu/jae89/

Guiding principles for linguists involved in legal interpretation

Guiding principles for linguists involved in legal interpretation

- 1. Linguists are **not** judges
 - They should not interfere in the judicial process
- 2. Linguists are **not** political activitists
 - They should not use their expertise as an excuse to participate in partisan political debates
- 3. Linguists are **not** hired guns
 - They should not perform linguistic analysis with the goal of supporting a biased position, especially for money
- 4. Linguists are **not** (usually) lexicographers
 - They should avoid conclusive statements about word definitions
- 5. Linguists are **not** prescriptivists
 - They should focus on describing language rather than prescribing or proscribing language choices

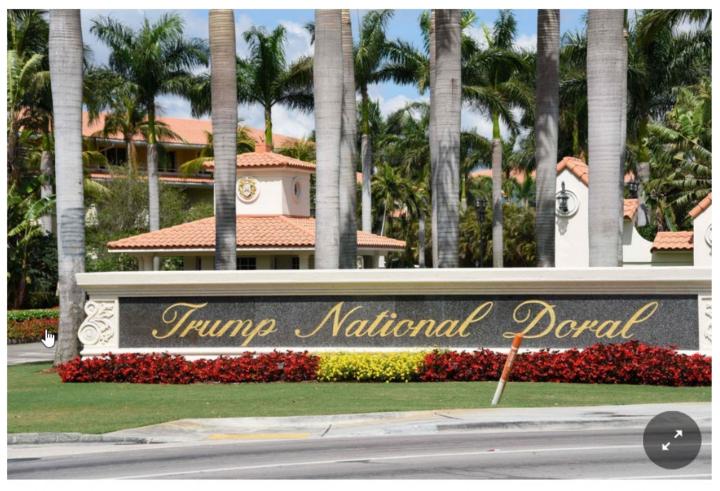
Guiding principles for linguists involved in legal interpretation

- 1. Linguists **are** (usually) scientists
 - They should apply the scientific method to address important linguistic questions
- 2. Linguists are language experts
 - They should account for all relevant linguistic parameters and apply state of the art methods
- 3. Linguists have specialized training
 - They should apply use their specialized skills but *should not* purport to be an expert in areas of linguistics outside of their expertise
- 4. Linguists are language professionals
 - They should educate the legal profession about the benefits of specialized legal training
- 5. Linguists can be interdisciplinary scholars
 - They should work hand-in-hand with legal scholars

This morning's newspaper

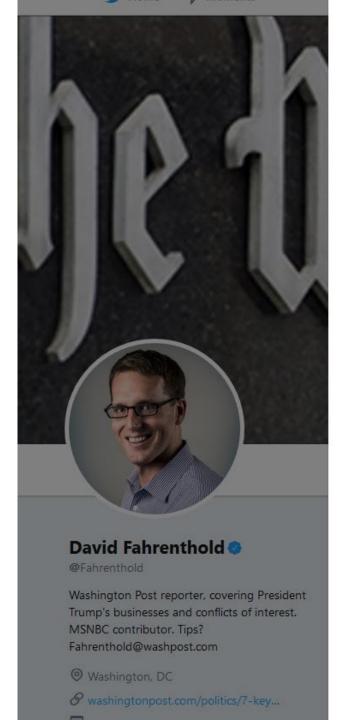


Trump Will Host Next G7 Summit at His Doral Resort



The Trump National Doral resort near Miami has struggled financially since the Trump family bought it out of bankruptcy in 2012. Michele Eve Sandberg/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Cunningham-Egbert Meaning of Emolument

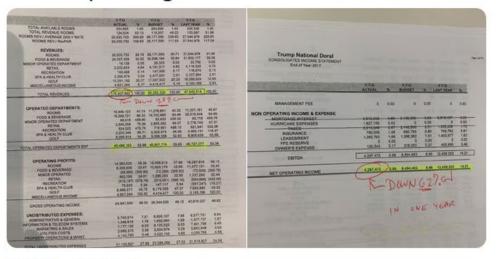






How bad does @realdonaldtrump's Doral need this business? Look what's happened there during his presidency. In ONE YEAR, from '16-'17:

- —revenue fell 13.8%
- —Net operating income fell 62%



11:07 AM - 17 Oct 2019





Replying to @Fahrenthold @maggieNYT @realDonaldTrump

(((Howard Forman))) @ @thehowie · 19h

Marginal revenue for a hotel makes all the difference between losing money and making a LOT. High fixed costs, low variable costs. Empty beds are death to this business. The G-7 with its high occupancy during set-up and meeting will ensure it is profitable for the year.

Representative Jerrold Nadler of New York, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee

 which is charged with drawing up articles of impeachment against the president

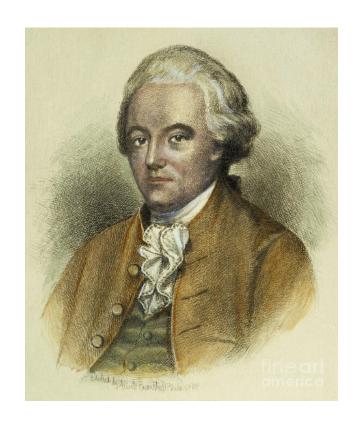
 "He is exploiting his office and making official U.S. government decisions for his personal financial gain"

 "The emoluments clauses of the Constitution exist to prevent exactly this kind of corruption."

Constitutional Convention August 23, 1787

Charles Pinckney Delegate from South Carolina

Moved to add to Article I:



"no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them [the United States], shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, <u>Emolument</u>, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State."

Virginia Ratifying Convention June 15, 1788

Governor Edmund Randolph



Explains the Foreign Emolument Clause

- "[It] restrains any person in office from accepting of any present or emolument, title or office, from any foreign prince or state.
- This restriction is provided to prevent corruption.
- [This] provision [is] against the danger ... of the President receiving emoluments from foreign powers.
- If discovered, he may be impeached.
- I consider, therefore, that he is restrained from receiving any present or emolument whatever. It is impossible to guard better against corruption."

#TRUMPHOTELS

JOIN the TRUMP LIFESTYLE

















SHOP NOW

GET EXCLUSIVE NEWS UPDATES

SIGN UP for TRUMP OFFERS

Email Address

CAREERS

ELITE PARTNERS

SUBMIT >

AFFILIATE CHARITIES

FOR DEVELOPERS

GIVE THE GIFT OF LUXURY

Shop GIFT CARDS

SHOP GIFT CARDS

TRUMP ORGANIZATION

SITEMAP

CONTACT US

TRUMP TRUMP HOTEL GROUP



for www.trumphotels.com...

1899: Old Post Office built

2013: 60 year lease to Trump Organization

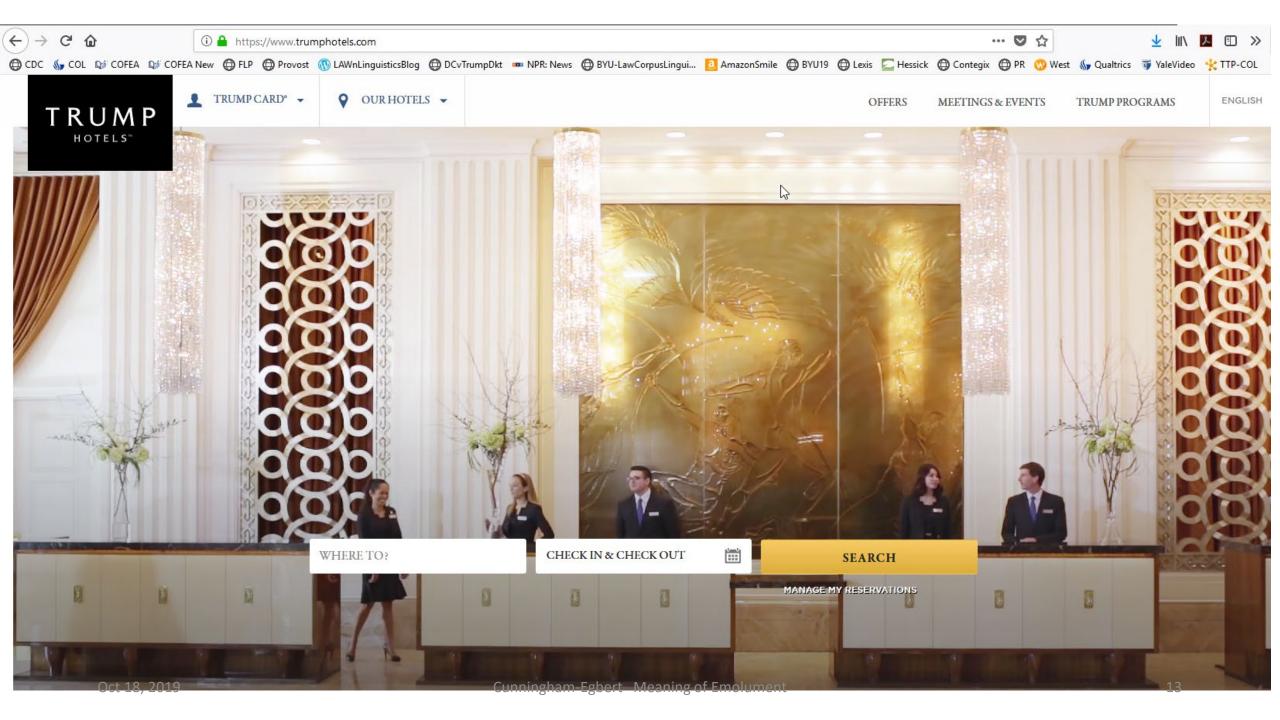
10/26/16: Reopened as Trump International Hotel

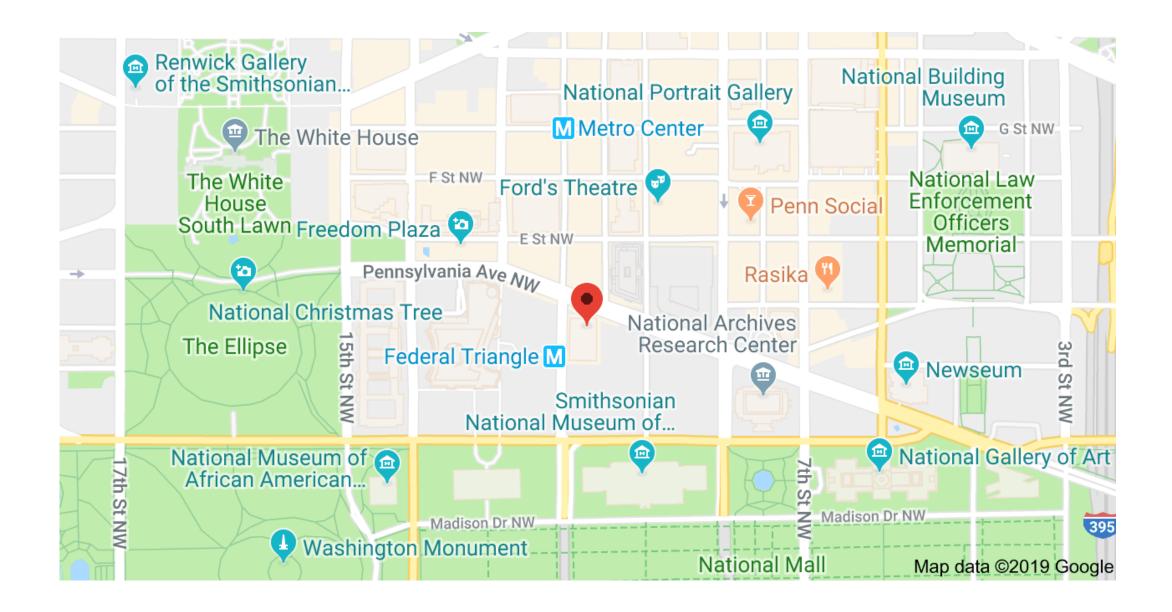




Oct 18, 2019

Cunningham-Egbert Meaning of Emolument





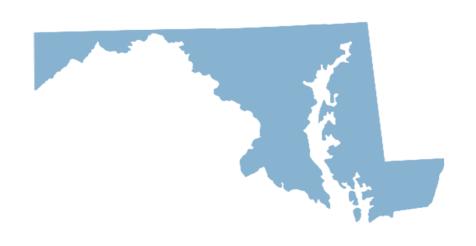
How the Trump hotel changed Washington's culture of influence Washington Post Aug 7, 2017



- Veterans groups were brought in to lobby Congress against a law allowing victims of 911 to sue Saudi Arabia
- \$270,000 in hotel charges
 - \$190,000 for rooms
 - \$78,000 for catering
 - \$1,600 for parking
- The bill was paid by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

District of Columbia and State of Maryland v. Trump

Filed June 12, 2017 in U.S. District Court, Maryland





President's Motion to Dismiss

- when the Constitution was ratified "emolument" had two distinct meanings:
- a "narrow" sense limited to "profit arising from an office or employ"
- a "broad" sense meaning "benefit, advantage or profit"
- emolument in the Constitution only referred to the narrow meaning

Emolument Cases — Current Status

DC & Maryland v Trump (Maryland)

- July 25, 2018: Trial court denies President's Motion to Dismiss
 - "emolument" covers profits from the Trump Hotel
 - Relies heavily on friend of court brief filed by legal historians listing definition of "emolument" in all late 18th century dictionaries
- December 20, 2018: U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit grant's President's emergency motion to halt trial court proceedings
 - Sets expedited briefing schedule
- January 29, 2019: Clark Cunningham & Jesse Egbert file friend of court brief in support of neither party

Brief can be downloaded at: www.clarkcunningham.org/Law-Linguistics.html

In The

United States Court of Appeals

For The Fourth Circuit

In Re: DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, in his official capacity and in his individual capacity,

Petitioner.

ON APPEAL FROM THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND AT GREENBELT

BRIEF OF AMICI CURIAE
PROFESSOR CLARK D. CUNNINGHAM AND
PROFESSOR JESSE EGBERT
ON BEHALF OF NEITHER PARTY

Emolument Cases – Current Status

DC & Maryland v Trump (Maryland)

- Amicus brief cited and discussed in subsequent briefs filed by both President and Maryland/DC
- July 11, 2019 Three-judge panel of the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals orders dismissal based on lack of standing
 - Does not address meaning of emolument
- September 5, 2019 Maryland and DC file petition to have dismissal order reviewed by all 15 judges of the 4th circuit ("en banc review")
- Case may end up at U.S. Supreme Court

Senator Richard Blumenthal et al v. Trump Filed June 14, 2017 in U.S. District Court, D.C.

30 members of Senate

171 members of House of Representatives





Senator Richard Blumenthal, Democrat of Connecticut, said

- Democrats in Congress who have one of the pending lawsuits against Mr. Trump
- will now revise it to include the president's plan to have the Group of 7 meeting at the Doral

Emolument Cases — Current Status

- Blumenthal v Trump (District of Columbia)
 - Sep 28, 2018: Trial court denies President's motion to dismiss
 - Cites and largely follows reasoning of Maryland trial court including reliance on 18th century dictionaries
 - President's asks trial court to permit immediate appeal
 - Cunningham-Egbert 4th amicus brief and working paper cited by both President and Congressional plaintiffs in briefs on this issue
 - Trial court refuses President's request for immediate appeal
 - July 19, 2019: Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit orders trial court to halt proceedings and allow appeal
 - October 2019: briefs filed in the D.C. Court of appeals
 - Issues will include meaning of "emolument"
 - 10/8/19 Cunningham & Egbert file amicus brief

FOR DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA GRAL ARGUMENT HAS NOT YET BEEN SCHEDULED

OCT 09 2019 United States Court of Appeals RECEIVED For The District of Columbia Circuit

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL; RICHARD J. DURBIN; PATTY MURRAY; ELIZABETH WARREN; AMY KLOBUCHAR; BERNARD SANDERS; PATRICK J. LEAHY; SHELDON WHITEHOUSE; CHRISTOPHER A. COONS; MAZIE K. HIRONO; MICHAEL F. BENNET; CORY A. BOOKER; MARIA CANTWELL; BENJAMIN L. CARDIN; TOM CARPER; CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO; TAMMY DUCKWORTH; KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND; KAMALA D. HARRIS; MARTIN HEINRICH; TIM KAINE; EDWARD J. MARKEY; JEFF MERKLEY; CHRIS MURPHY; JACK REED; BRIAN SCHATZ; TOM UDALL; CHRIS VAN HOLLEN; RON WYDEN; NANCY PELOSI; STENY H. HOYER; JAMES E. CLYBURN; LINDA T. SANCHEZ; JERROLD NADLER; ZOE LOFGREN; SHEILA JACKSON LEE; STEVE COHEN; HENRY C. HANK JOHNSON; TED DEUTCH; KAREN BASS; CEDRIC L. RICHMOND; HAKEEM JEFFRIES; DAVID N. CICILLINE; ERIC SWALWELL; TED LIEU; JAMIE RASKIN,

Plaintiffs - Appellees,

V.

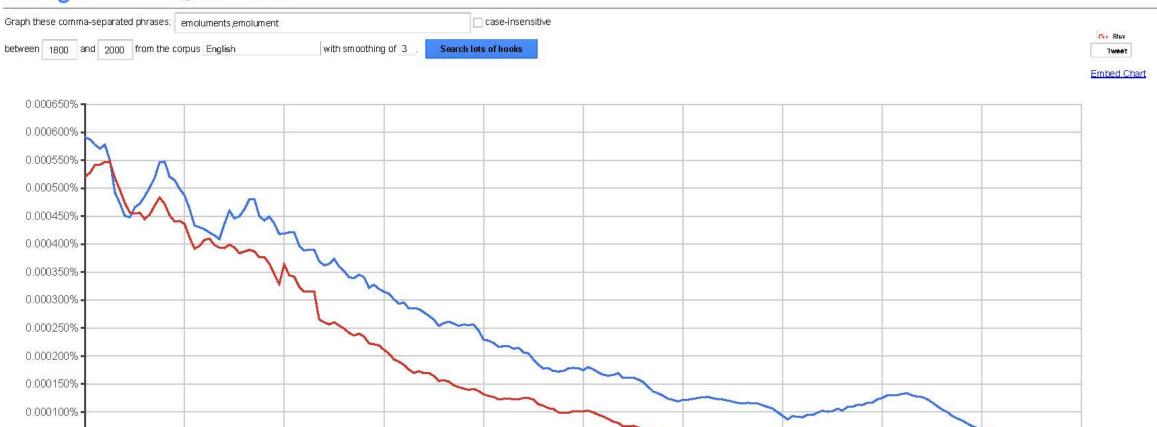
DONALD J. TRUMP, in his official capacity as President of the United States of America,

Defendant - Appellant.

ON APPEAL FROM THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

BRIEF OF AMICI CURIAE PROFESSOR CLARK D. CUNNINGHAM AND PROFESSOR JESSE EGBERT IN SUPPORT OF NEITHER PARTY





Search in Google Books:

0.000050%

0.000000%| 1800

1800 - 1808	1809 - 1817	<u> 1818 - 1849</u>	1850 - 1944	<u> 1945 - 2000</u>	emoluments	English
<u> 1800 - 1805</u>	1806 - 1812	1813 - 1819	1820 - 1910	<u> 1911 - 2000</u>	emolument	English

1860

1840

1820

1900

(click on line/label for focus)

1920

1940

1960

1980

1880

emoluments

emolument

2000

Corpus analysis of emolument

Corpus of Founding Era American English (COFEA)

119,801 texts 154,039,732 words

Search Now

The Corpus of Founding Era American English covers the time period starting with the reign of King George III, and ending with the death of George Washington (1760-1799). COFEA contains documents from ordinary people of the day, the Founders, and legal sources, including letters, diaries, newspapers, non-fiction books, fiction, sermons, speeches, debates, legal cases, and other legal materials. The majority of texts have been pulled from the following six sources: the National Archive Founders Online; William S. Hein & Co., HeinOnline; Text Creation Partnership (TCP) Evans Bibliography (University of Michigan); Elliot's Debates; Farrand's Records; and the U.S. Statutes-at-Large from the first five Congresses.

If emolument only refers to profit from office or employment...

- H₁: Nouns preceding other emolument(s) in coordinated noun phrases
 (i.e. lists of nouns) will only refer to the narrow meaning
 - Cats, dogs, and other animals
 - *Cats, birds, and other dogs
- Method: identify all nouns preceding other emolument(s) in coordinated NPs
- **Results:** *Emolument* often appeared (35 percent of the time) at the end of a "coordinated noun phrase," preceded by 'other'. Any previous nouns in the list are also emoluments.
 - We can say "dogs, cats, and other animals", but not "cats, birds, and other dogs"
 - bounties, fees, contracts, clothing, privileges, places

Nouns preceding other emolument(s) in coordinated Noun Phrases

Bounties	Lands	Privileges
Clothing	Liberty	Rank
Command	Offices	Rations
Commissions	Pay	Subsistence
Commutation	Gratuity	Sum
Contracts	Pensions	Tithes
Fees	Perquisites	Toll
Forage	Places	

If emolument only refers to profit from office or employment...

- H₂: Emolument(s) will require modification less frequently than the average noun (because the meaning is narrow and self-evident without modification)
- Method: percent of emolument(s) pre-modified by adjectives or postmodified by prepositional phrases

• Results:

		PPs as postnominal modifiers
emolument(s)	30%	29%
other nouns	15%	16%

If emolument only refers to profit from office or employment...

- H₃: Emolument(s) will not be modified by adjectives related to official or government capacities (because these words would be redundant)
 - *metal fork
- Method: semantically classify attributive adjectives
- Result: Emolument frequently pre-modified by adjectives related to official or government capacities
 - official
 - federal
 - public

Alexander Hamilton, 1793

• I shall regret your final determination to resign at the same time, that I should be wanting in candour were I to hold out to you the probability of any material increase of your present official emoluments.

If emolument only refers to profit from office or employment...

- H₄: Emolument(s) will not be modified when communicating that something had been received or accepted "arising from an official's services."
- Method: search for all cases of emolument within six words on either side of the words receive and accept
 - Manually eliminate cases where *emolument** was not the direct object
- Result: Most were pre-modified or post-modified by a linguistic structure that served to further specify the meaning of emolument
 - 93% of the cases of receive emolument
 - 77% of the cases of *accept emolument*
 - Many cases specifically referred to receiving or accepting an emolument for "services rendered pursuant to an office"
 - and yet added words to emolument to so indicate

George Washington, 1798

• I have finally determined to accept the Commission of Commander in Chief of the Armies of the United States ... I must decline ... that I can receive any emoluments annexed to the appointment

Conclusions

• Emolument was a common word in the founding era

 There is no evidence that there were two distinct senses of emolument

• Emolument had a broad, inclusive meaning

 The evidence suggests that revenue from hotel would have been considered an emolument