



"My lobbyist trumps your legal team."

JIM C'S QUIZ OF THE WEEK MONDAY – 3/10/2008

Influence peddling and persistent scandals have typically focused on government corruption and the role played by lobbyists.

HOW DID THE TERM “LOBBYIST” ORIGINATE?

***Definition:* Lobbying is the practice of trying to persuade legislators to propose, pass, or defeat legislation or to change existing laws.**

***Online Etymology:* “Political sense of “those who seek to influence legislation” is attested 1808 in American English, in reference to the custom of influence-seekers gathering in large entrance-halls outside legislative chambers. *Lobbyist* is first attested 1863.”**

Some believe that the origin of “to lobby” can be traced to President Grant, who apparently spent his afternoons in Washington, D.C. enjoying “liquid refreshment” at a table in the lobby of the Willard Hotel. Agents seeking Grant’s official favors found that their interviews with the President were more productive the later in the afternoon they were conducted.

The *Dictionary of Americanisms* by John Russell Bartlett (1848) reflects this idiom, which can still be interpreted to mean “arm-twisting of spineless legislators by sleazy agents of special interests.”

Conventional Wisdom: Lobbyist = Advocate / Influence Peddler

Moment of Zen: I’m shocked to know bribes were accepted!