

JIM C – QUIZ OF THE WEEK

MONDAY – 12/15/08

Once a hush-hush topic rarely discussed openly in politics, the concept of “pay to play” is in the national spotlight due to Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich’s lack of finesse and competence.

HOW DID THE TERM “PAY TO PLAY” ORIGINATE?

***Definition (Wikipedia):* A system by which one pays money in order to become a player. Similar to *payola* in the music industry, or to use a sports analogy, what one must pay to “get in the game.” Some uses refer to illicit activities, such as the exchange of money for influence in politics, while others can be normal, even expected.**

***Origin:* The exact origin of the term has not been established.**

***History:* The spoils of war and horse trading have always been staples of American politics at both the state and federal level, but these have always been done behind closed doors, in the back room.**

***Similar Terms:* Quid pro quo; horse trading; you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours; and influence peddling. However in the open, “How much are you willing to pay?” appears a bit too crass.**

***Conventional Wisdom:* Pay To Play = Entry Fee For Political Favors**

***Moment of Zen:* Transparency will help us negotiate the treacherous avenues of power without yielding to its temptations.**