



PRESS RELEASE

Maryland & D.C. AGs Sue Trump for Constitutional Violations

Suit Seeks to End Alleged Violations of Emoluments Clauses

WASHINGTON, DC (June 12, 2017) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh and District of Columbia Attorney General Karl A. Racine announced today that they have filed a federal lawsuit against President Donald Trump, alleging that the President’s wide-ranging business entanglements violate the Constitution’s Foreign and Domestic Emoluments Clauses. The suit seeks an injunction to put a stop to the president’s constitutional violations.

The Emoluments Clauses were included in the Constitution as anti-corruption provisions, meant to shield the president from outside influence and ensure that he works in the nation’s interest rather than focusing on his own bottom line. Specifically, the Foreign Emoluments Clause bars foreign powers from influencing or inducing the President with money or other items of value. The Domestic Emoluments Clause prevents individual states from competing against each other by giving the President money or other things of value.

“President Trump has violated important anti-corruption provisions of the U.S. Constitution. We are a nation of laws and no one—including the President of the United States—is above the law,” said Attorney General Racine. “As state attorneys general representing the people, we have a duty to serve as a check and balance against the president, whose business activities have opened the door to the type of corruption the Framers of our Constitution aimed to prevent.”

“Elected leaders must serve the people, and not their personal financial interests. That is the indispensable foundation of a democracy,” said Attorney General Frosh. “We cannot treat a president’s ongoing violations of the Constitution and disregard for the rights of the American people as the new and acceptable status quo. The president, above all other elected officials, must have only the interests of Americans at the heart of every decision.”

“President Trump’s continued ownership interest in a global business empire, which renders him deeply enmeshed with a legion of foreign and domestic government actors, violates the Constitution, calling into question the rule of law and the integrity of our political system,” the complaint states. For example, the President continues to own luxury hotel and resort properties - including a new one just down the street from the White House -- catering to foreign and state government business. He continues to seek --- and in fact recently obtained from China -- valuable trademarks from foreign countries for his business ventures. Foreign and U.S. government entities rent space in Trump-owned buildings.

According to the complaint, “[U]ncertainty about whether the President is acting in the best interests of the American people, or rather for his own ends or personal enrichment, inflicts lasting harm on our democracy. The Framers of the Constitution foresaw that possibility, and acted to prevent that harm.”

Attorneys General Racine and Frosh expressed their thanks to their staffs and to several partners who provided assistance in assembling the lawsuit. In particular, they thanked Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) for their assistance.

The full complaint [can be found here](#). For more information about the lawsuit, including a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), please visit www.oag.dc.gov or www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/Emoluments/.