

Trump's 29th trip to Mar-a-Lago brings golf tab to 334 years of presidential salary



U.S. President Donald Trump returned to Mar-a-Lago over the weekend for the 29th golf-related trip of his presidency to his for-profit Palm Beach, Florida, resort, raising his total taxpayer golf tab to \$133.8 million.

That figure translates to 334 years of the presidential salary that Trump and his supporters frequently boast he is not taking.

During Barack Obama's presidency, Trump frequently claimed he was playing golf too much and at too great an expense to taxpayers. "I play golf to relax. My company is in great shape. @BarackObama plays golf to escape work while America goes down the drain," Trump tweeted in December 2011.

"Can you believe that, with all of the problems and difficulties facing the U.S., President Obama spent the day playing golf. Worse than Carter," he wrote three years later.

As he began his own run for the White House, candidate Trump repeatedly promised that golf would never make it onto a President Trump's schedule. "I love golf, but if I were in the White House, I don't think I'd ever see Turnberry again. I don't think I'd ever see Doral again," he told a rally audience in

February 2016, referring to his courses in Scotland and Miami. “I don’t ever think I’d see anything. I just want to stay in the White House and work my ass off.”

Yet after three years in office, Trump has spent two-and-a-half times as many days on a golf course as Obama had done at the same point in his first term. If Trump plays golf both Saturday and Sunday, he will have played 248 times. Obama by his 1,123rd day in office had played 92 times.

And because Trump insists on playing at courses he owns, the cost to taxpayers has been nearly four times as high as it was for Obama. More than two-thirds of Trump’s golf outings involve seven-figure trips aboard Air Force One, mainly to Florida and New Jersey, but also to Los Angeles, Ireland and Scotland. Obama, in contrast, played most of his golf on courses at military bases within a short drive of the White House.

What’s more, Trump’s insistence on playing at courses he owns and profits from has put at least a few million taxpayer dollars into Trump’s cash registers in the form of hotel room and restaurant charges for the White House staff and Secret Service agents who accompany him.

The Washington Post found recently that Trump’s business has charged the Secret Service as much as \$650 a room per night at Mar-a-Lago ? more than three times the normal rate that federal employees are supposed to spend in South Florida ? and \$17,000 a month for a cottage at Trump’s Bedminster, New Jersey, resort. During an early Mar-a-Lago visit, White House employees ran up a \$1,006 bar tab, which taxpayers also paid.

How many taxpayer dollars precisely are flowing into Trump’s pocket is not known because the White House refuses to detail how many executive branch employees stay at Trump properties and how much they are being billed.

The president is the sole beneficiary of the trust that now owns his family business. He promised during his campaign that he would separate himself from the Trump Organization should he win, but reneged on that pledge even before taking office.

Trump similarly promised he would release his tax returns when he ran for president, but he has refused to do that as well.

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