What to Believe
By Al Sage

On Sunday, July 15, the Clarion-Ledger published an article on its front page that was both a news story and an editorial. It began with allegations against an individual bail agent and segued into a criticism of the bail bond system in all Mississippi criminal courts. The author, Joseph Neff, is a journalist who works for the Marshall Project, whose mission is stated clearly on its website: “The Marshall Project is a nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization that seeks to create and sustain a sense of national urgency about the U.S. criminal justice system.” That statement makes clear the attack mode of the organization and the activist nature of its “news”.

Several years ago some members of the Bail Agents Association had a bad experience with the Marshall Project. So, when Mr. Neff called some of its members for his article, they explained to him their concern and reluctance to discuss his allegations because of their previous experience.

During the Legislative Session, Mr. Neff also called me. Per my normal policy, I explained to Mr. Neff that I would not speak officially for the Association, but would be happy to try to answer his questions and get some official response from the Association.

We met, began talking, but suddenly, Mr. Neff remembered he had a plane to catch; he practically ran away from me. I thought it rather odd, but upon reading his article, I think that maybe I was saying some things that didn’t support the fact statements in his article.

The “story” actually has two parts. One part focused on a single member of the profession and proceeded to indict the whole profession with unproven allegations against that individual. One member of a profession shouldn’t poison a profession. If that were so, we would be holding our nose over every licensed profession in the state.

Then, there is the second part of the story – the editorial attack on the profession based on way the system works and the financial side of the business. There are many facts in the editorial and a lot of them are incorrect, misrepresentations, incomplete or based on questionable data. The article written by President Chris Williams responds to those, but there will be more attacks and from every front.

The attack on the bail bond industry is a part of a larger effort to effect “reform” of the criminal justice system that could undermine public safety and law enforcement. When someone says “reform”, be wary, be very wary. We must be in the business of educating legislators and others about the nature of these reforms and theirs impact on our communities.
Mississippi Bail Agents Association’s summer meeting was held this year at Mississippi’s Gulf Coast at the IP Casino Resort and Spa in Biloxi MS. Our welcome speaker was Gulfport’s District Attorney, Joel Smith. Our guest speakers were Chief of Police of Gulfport, Leonard Papania and Ms. State Representative, Mark Baker. Our guest speakers expressed how bail plays a beneficial role on the criminal justice system in their servicing areas. Also speaking was Ms. Insurance Commissioner, Mike Chaney.

Others who attended were PBUS, Deep South Director, Jennifer Ricks; Justice Court Judge & Association Executive Director, Judge Melvin Ray and Ms. Justice Court Clerk Association President, Sandra Owen, along with over 120 bail agents across the state. Thank you for your attendance.

Mark your calendar for January 8, 2019

Winter General Assembly Meeting 1:00pm - 4:00pm
MBAA’s Legislative Reception 4:30pm - 7:00pm
Both to be held at the Old Capitol Inn

MBAA 2018 Scholarship winner
Rachael Clements
not pictured
Why Get Your Bail Education with MBAA?

The Mississippi Bail Agents Association offers you a quality education with our experienced instructor Judge Leslie Johnson. Judge Johnson is the retired Director for the Mississippi Judicial College. Prior to assuming directorship of the college, Honorable Leslie Johnson served the State of Alabama as Circuit Judge for fourteen years and prior to that he served as deputy district attorney for six years. Judge Johnson received his B.A. degree from Vanderbilt University, his M. S. in Criminal Justice from the Samford University, and his LL.M. from the University of Mississippi.

As you can see receiving your education with The Mississippi Bail Agents Association and Judge Leslie Johnson will guarantee you the most accurate information regarding your profession.

MBAA also has a diverse board of directors made up of both Soliciting and Limited Liability Professional Bail Agents that work tirelessly in protected you interest in issues that affect your business.

MBAA appreciates your continued support.

MBAA Board of Directors

EDUCATION UPDATE:

MBAA has wrapped up the 2018 continuing education year. More than 650 agents received their required 8 hours of education through one of the 12 classes offered throughout the state.

2019 class schedule will be provided early January. Watch for our email with your list of dates and times.

Class schedules and registration can be found on our website at www.msbail.org under the EVENT TAB.

New price for Pre-Licenses Class

MBAA has changed the pre-licenses class fee to $850.00

Upcoming Pre-Licensing Classes

September 10-13, 2018
November 5-8, 2018

Register now at www.msbail.org under the EVENT TAB.

Attending general assembly meeting for your continuing education credit

Please keep in mind if you attend the two (2) General Assembly Conferences within the licensure year (Jan, & July), are a voting member of the Association and pay a yearly registration fee of $50.00, your General Assembly attendance can be used for your continuing education.
Mississippi Bail Agents Association Benefits

MBAA is a state association that represents ALL bail agents’ interest in legislation and other issues affecting the bail industry. Being involved in any association can be costly and time consuming. Our members think it’s worth it and hope you will to.

- MBAA host 2 annual meetings with informative speakers and provide the opportunity for bail agents across the state to discuss and resolve common bail issues.
- MBAA provides required educational classes throughout the state with the most experienced instructor. And education fees are spent to support your industry.
- MBAA offers quarterly newsletters, which are full of bail related issues.
- MBAA is the most effective way for learning about your industries concerns.
- MBAA provides voting members the opportunity to vote on issues that affect their business at membership meetings.

MBAA ask that you take part in your state association by becoming a voting member or just by participating in the benefits offered by your association. For more information visit us online at www.msbail.org or by call the association office, 601-899-8599.