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Better Business Bureau raises rates to rebuild reputation

West Palm Beach, FL

Non-profit accused of giving members high grades

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Posted: 11/20/2010
By: Katie LaGrone

PALM BEACH COUNTY, Fla. - An Executive Committee from the Better Business Bureau voted unanimously Thursday to change the way it rates businesses and how the organization investigates complaints. The action comes days after the 98 year old organization was accused of giving paying members better treatment and higher grades.

"Legalized mob, that's all I see them as," said William Trouard who is upset with the Better Business Bureau. Trouard lost credibility in the BBB recently after going through arbitration. Trouard felt the mediator was biased towards the contractor he

was having trouble with.



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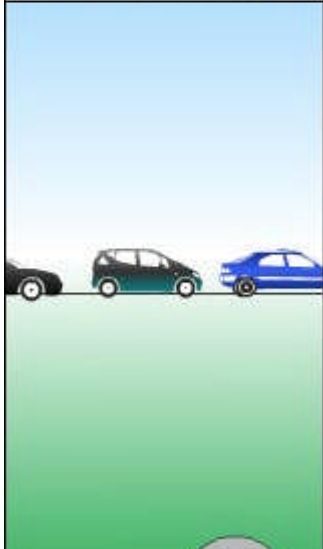
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"I felt like they were his own defense team, like that was his attorneys," he said.

But consumers aren't the only ones feeling like they've been duped by the BBB.

Genine Ching and her husband own and operate A All Star Entertainment. The party entertainment company is not a member of the Better Business Bureau and since the summer, Ching has noticed her rating randomly go from a C to a B-.

"We've not had any issues, we've been in business for 13 years, no complaints, no license problems, I don't know how they justify their ratings, it's very confusing," she said.

The Contact 5 Investigators have learned Florida's Attorney General has also been fielding complaints, most of them by people accusing the watchdog group of watching out for its paying members.

"We need to better police ourselves, we need to better vet companies we're providing information on," said Brodie White, President of the Better Business Bureau of Southeast Florida.

Brodie stands by its ratings; the organization is making changes such as no longer giving additional points to paying members.

In addition, as of midnight Friday morning, every business was raised by a 1/2 rating, including A All Star Entertainment, which now holds a B rating.

Ching still isn't impressed. "I would say we're a solid A, if not an A+."

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