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Paging Beck: Better Business Bureau reportedly admits and will cease "pay to play" ratings

November 19, 2010 1:29 pm ET by Oliver Willis

Glenn Beck has regularly defended precious metals dealer and advertiser Goldline (for whom he's done [personal testimonials](#)) against congressional [scrutiny](#) by touting the company's "A+" rating from the Better Business Bureau (BBB). But reports have surfaced, from [Mother Jones](#) and [ABC](#), that the BBB's ratings have more to do with how much money a company pays the bureau than what sort of service the business provides to its customers. Now, ABC News [reports](#) that the BBB has acknowledged "automatically giv[ing] better grades to its member businesses" is changing their policy on payments and ratings:

Under fire for its controversial rating system, the Better Business Bureau has announced that it will no longer automatically give better grades to its member businesses. The action comes on the heels of an ABC News investigation into allegations that the BBB is running a "pay to play" scheme in which A plus ratings are only awarded to those businesses that pay membership fees, and lower grades are given to those who don't.

However, Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, a prominent critic of the BBB's rating system, said he remained "troubled" by the system and wanted the BBB to make more extensive changes.

Steve Cox, the CEO and President of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, announced that by next week the BBB ratings system will no longer give extra points to businesses that pay for accreditation. Under the current system, extra points are awarded to member

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businesses and only those that are accredited can receive the coveted A plus rating. In addition, the BBB announced that it will conduct a review of its accrediting process and "as soon as possible, make changes that will apply system-wide." The BBB says an "independent third party" will assist in the review process.

If it wasn't clear before, it is now - the "A+" rating mantra repeated by Beck doesn't appear to have any serious independent authority behind it.

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by Invent a Scandal ([November 19, 2010 1:33 pm ET](#))

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I'm afraid there's nothing the BBB can do at this point to restore credibility.

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by JoeSixpack ([November 19, 2010 3:04 pm ET](#))

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The second "B" stands for bullshlt.

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by uncle.billy ([November 19, 2010 3:13 pm ET](#))

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Beck and corruption, who would have thunk it ????

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by oneleft ([November 19, 2010 4:09 pm ET](#))

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and all along i thought the bbb was some kind of reputable company that kept track of the bad ones. turns out they don't run a better business after all.

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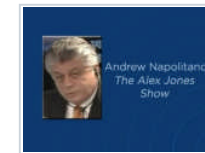
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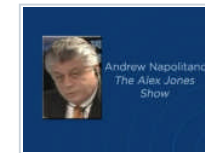
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