

Why was ABCR Created and What Has It Ever Done For Me?

The Alabama Legislature created the Alabama Board of Court Reporting in 2006 and specifically provided the following mission: "To establish and maintain a standard of competency for individuals engaged in the practice of court reporting and for the protection of the public, in general, and for the litigants whose rights to personal freedom and property are affected by the competency of court reporters." Ala. Code § 34-8B-1.

Basically, ABCR has to think like a consumer of court reporting services. However, if we are fulfilling our mandate, we are ultimately serving licensees and the industry as well. ACRA is the clear advocate for the industry; ABCR is the clear advocate for the consumer. It is always ideal when our two organizations can work together and we are blessed to have a long history of doing just that in Alabama. It really does take both standing together to make an impact for the strength of the industry and the level of service to consumers.

Most all licensure Boards are brought into existence in the first place because the industry called for it and we are no different. It was the continued efforts of ACRA that established licensure in Alabama. So, why do most industries call for the regulation of their own profession? Occupations enhance their status as a professional by seeking a regulatory law. It legitimizes a profession. Meaning, it provides a professional credential. It declares that court reporting is a specialized profession that requires education and training.

A lot of people would like to be able to call themselves a court reporter, but with licensure, you can't simply call yourself a court reporter unless you are licensed to do so by completing minimum standards for public protection. Just like attorneys, just like doctors, court reporting is a profession requiring a specific skill. This is why licensure is an accomplishment for the industry and ultimately for each of you as an individual professional - a qualified practitioner of court reporting services.

When designed and implemented carefully, licensing can offer important consumer protections, as well as benefit the industry. So, what has ABCR done to help you? Three years ago a bill was introduced in Alabama that provided for digital recording rather than a licensed court reporter. ABCR was able to provide our enabling statute and mandate of public protection through licensing on this matter to the legislature and as a result the legislation went no further. We look to continue that role because by standing up for you, we are standing up for the consumer. Yes, we are mandated by State law to protect consumers and yes, we are rooting for our licensees. No one wants you, as a licensed court reporter, to be more successful than we do. The more successful you are, the better the service to consumers and public protection.