

Letters to the Editor

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Lawyers, too, oppose secrecy agreements

The Iowa Association for Justice, Iowa's largest organization of lawyers for injured Iowans, has long opposed the blanket use of secrecy agreements in lawsuit settlements.

So our members were surprised to see the Register editorialize that "lawyers for plaintiffs routinely demand confidentiality agreements when offering to settle lawsuits," ("U of I Settlement Secrecy Should End," July 30).

In most cases it is the party being sued who will demand a secrecy agreement. The attorney for the plaintiff is rarely in a position to refuse that condition as it would jeopardize his/her client's settlement.

There are rare instances in which injured Iowans, upon settling their lawsuit, will insist that certain aspects of their case be sealed. Perhaps they are suing after losing a spouse or child, or after being physically or sexually abused, and they don't want friends and neighbors to read about what they've been through. Plaintiffs' lawyers owe an obligation to their clients in such situations.

It is the association's firm

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belief that when people in our state are harmed by wrongdoers' misconduct or negligence, those wrongdoers should be publicly accountable for their actions. Transparency deters future misconduct and stops the harm from spreading like a virus.

Plaintiffs' attorneys — like journalists — do their best to

expose corporate and governmental wrongdoing for all to see, even as wrongdoers scramble to hide their misdeeds.

— Brad Lint, executive director,
Iowa Association of Justice,
Des Moines

Why would anyone listen to bond raters?

It is reported that the credit rating agency Standard & Poor's