

# Guest commentary

## Let the free market be the judge

Barrett Moore is the founder and CEO of Sovereign Deed, A Catastrophe Response Company. For additional information visit [www.sovrn.com/response](http://www.sovrn.com/response).

In February 2006, my long contemplation of how to prepare loved ones to survive the bio-terror attacks that I researched as a young soldier in the 476th Military Intelligence Detachment reached fruition as I organized my newest company, Sovereign Deed. Sovereign

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Deed is the future of a new disaster-preparedness industry — created not for waging war or amassing private armies, but for saving lives. Belying the assertion that only the wealthy will hire our company, service offerings begin at \$485.

Locating Sovereign Deed's new response facility at Pellston would allow me to give back to the Northern Michigan area where my family's roots date to the 1890s. Although the facility would generate tax revenue and create desperately needed non-seasonal jobs, a vocal minority opposes it. Blinded and confused by their anti-war sentiments, they have leveled false and hateful allegations at my company and me. The Petoskey News-Review is

the only mainstream news media outlet to amplify their vitriol ("Sovereign Deed Questions Must Be Answered," Feb. 4, 2008).



Moore

Although I served honorably as a cadet in an Officer's billet in the Army Reserves (via the Simultaneous Membership Program), my opponents maliciously accused me of lying about having ever served in the military. They then berated me for both "claiming" to be an officer, and "claiming" to be enlisted, when, in fact, I rarely discuss my military service, it appears in one sentence in line 28 of my 35-line biography, and anyone associated with the company knows that my expertise on topics critical to Sovereign Deed stems from years of aggressive self-education, not from my decades-old Army experience.

Bloggers' refusal or inability to comprehend the business world, including the concept that capitalism requires entrepreneurs to take risks in order to create jobs, is worrisome. I started eight businesses in the last 30 years, and, while a factory fire at one resulted in reorganization under bankruptcy protection, the company was subsequently sold and is currently thriving. Henry Ford, Abraham Lincoln, Donald Trump and others suffered bankruptcy, too. The bloggers accuse legal malfeasance without basis, and fail to acknowledge that lawsuits are, unfortunately, a recognized cost of doing business today. Similarly, they criticize a routine confidentiality agreement with Emmet County, ignoring the public meeting that rendered it moot days later.

A less reckless investigation of events in Australia would reveal that I voluntarily risked my life and reputation to play a key role in the Australian government's conviction of a former customer who turned out to be a felon with apparent links to organized

crime. I was completely exonerated there, and the police officers who disparaged me were disciplined. As for Triple Canopy, legal rulings in my favor, coupled with a significant settlement, bear witness to the utter falsity of the claims lodged against me by certain shareholders, whose goal was to control the direction of the company and oust the founder and largest shareholder for the smallest possible price.

The blog attacks have been painful to my family, my company, its employees, and me, but they have also unfairly demeaned the area's elected officials. Rep. Gary McDowell, Sen. Jason Allen, Jim Tamlyn, Lyn Johnson and Kelley Atkins, among others, should be applauded, not maligned. Their push to allow service enterprises to partake in existing (but to date unsuccessful) tax abatements originally designed to attract manufacturing enterprises to Emmet County is consistent with the changing economy, and their effort to elicit government funding to improve airport infrastructure would provide job opportunities and benefits for the good of all citizens.

I ask you to put aside the political passions the bloggers are trying to foment, and let the free market judge the merits of the idea on which Sovereign Deed was founded — namely, that the private sector really can help our strained and overtaxed public sector ensure that there are adequate supplies and services available to all Americans in the event of disaster.

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