

IN OUR OPINION

USC needs all-night shuttle

The recent announcement of a renovation and beautification plan for Five Points is a welcome one, although long in coming. Now, students looking for food, an eclectic shop or a night on the town will walk among trees and lightning rather than cement and sewage.

Extended curbs, a possible traffic light and better lighting will be here within the next two years and will help make Columbia a safer place.

This is also a good time for the University to establish better lighting on campus and an all-night shuttle serving students both on campus and in Five Points.

Along with diminishing the likelihood of drunk drivers, a shuttle would give students a safe way home from a part of town known for poor lighting and crime.

First-year students are required to live on campus unless they live with a parent, and USC is responsible for those 2,000 students.

Many universities throughout the country use these buses to carry students farther than Five Points. If USC wants to take advantage of a renovation promoting safety and health, it ought to address the realities of student life and take care of its own.

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PATRIOT Act hurts liberty



ELEANOR BURKE

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The USA PATRIOT Act takes away essential American freedoms.

In December 2002, a young man named Imhrat is studying hard for his final exams at Georgia Southern University. Suddenly FBI officials burst into his dorm room. He is arrested and thrown into jail. For two weeks he is detained, until finally, his country's embassy can raise \$20,000 for bail and find a lawyer.

In jail, Imhrat meets others with similar stories. One man has been there for over three months with no contacts, no lawyer and no clear charges

against him. My friend Imhrat's crime? He is a citizen of Saudi Arabia. He comes from a prominent family with a stern Muslim upbringing and came to the United States to attend college because of our high-quality education system. He is not a criminal. He is not a radical. He is not a terrorist. But because of a bill called The PATRIOT Act he and thousands of others have been targeted as terrorists by our federal government because of their ethnicity.

Shortly after 9/11, President George W. Bush signed a 342-page document into law -- the USA PATRIOT Act. This so-called PATRIOT Act gives law enforcement agencies leeway to pry into citizens' lives under the guise of hunting down domestic terrorists. Although these citizens have been proven not guilty in association with any sort of terrorist involvement, they remain incarcerated. My friend is just one example.

October will be the two-year

anniversary of the PATRIOT Act. And these days, things are out of control. Citizens everywhere, dark skinned and light skinned, are being threatened. Suddenly dissent means silence. Now federal officials, aided by our local agencies, can pry into public library records and spy on patrons. Citizens' phone lines can be tapped. E-mails can be read. Your private information is now open to share between all levels of local, state, and federal government. Suddenly, freedom means enslavement.

America is our country. Therefore it is our duty to change what we don't like. It is our duty to say no to neighbors spying on neighbors. It is our duty to say no to the PATRIOT Act and regain our freedom to breathe, walk, think and live. For more information, please go to www.bordc.org.

Eleanor Burke is a third-year English student.