

MARATHON

Continued from page 1

performances by McFly and the Inflatables. The event will also be catered. Students and community members are welcome to come at any time during the event to support the dancers and the local children's hospital. Registration for the Marathon continues until the day of the event.

Palmetto Health Children's Hospital is in Columbia and serves children of all ages with a range of medical problems. More than 82,000 children are treated every year, including 27,000 children in the emergency room. Money raised by Dance

Marathon will stay completely local.

Dance Marathon first came to USC in 1998. Now in its seventh year, Dance Marathon has raised more than \$280,000 — \$72,000 last year alone. Black said there is no way to tell how much money will be raised until the closing ceremony.

"You bite your nails until the very end. I don't want to jinx anything by guessing. You just do the best you can do," he said.

The theme for this year's Marathon is "Join the Legacy." Dance Marathon began in 1972 at Penn State to support its local children's hospital. The program has spread to universities all over the country and is endorsed by

Children's Miracle Network. These hospitals annually provide more than \$2.5 billion of charitable health care to children.

He also mentioned that it was "rewarding to see a smile on a child's face," and he still keeps in touch with the children and families he met last year.

Registration will continue through the day of the event for any last-minute participants. All students and community members are encouraged to participate. For more information, call 777-5780 or visit www.sa.sc.edu/dancemarathon.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecocknews@gwm.sc.edu

Senate votes to limit class-action lawsuits

By JESSE J. HOLLAND
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Senate approved a measure Thursday to help shield businesses from major class action lawsuits like the ones that have been brought against tobacco companies, giving President Bush the first legislative victory of his second term.

Under the legislation, long sought by big business, large multistate class action lawsuits could no longer be heard in small state courts. Such courts have handed out multimillion-dollar verdicts.

Instead, the cases would be heard by federal judges, who have not proven as open to those type of lawsuits.

The Senate passed the bill 72-26, and it now goes to the House.

Bush called the bill a strong step forward.

"Our country depends on a fair legal system that protects people who have been harmed without encouraging junk lawsuits that undermine confidence in our courts while hurting our economy," Bush said in a statement released in Pennsylvania where he was promoting his Social Security proposals.

Thomas Donohue, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said, "Now it's time for the House to finish the job and take back our civil justice system from plaintiffs' lawyers seeking jackpot justice."

But Todd A. Smith, president of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America,

said, "Every American's legal rights are diminished by this anti-consumer legislation." The association said insurance, tobacco, drug, chemical and other companies had financed the push to get the legislation through the Senate.

Bush and other bill supporters — who have pushed for the legislation for almost six years — say it is needed because greedy lawyers have taken advantage of the state system by filing frivolous lawsuits in state courts where they know they can get big verdicts.

Senators who back the bill say that lawyers make more money from such cases than do the actual victims, and that lawyers sometimes threaten companies with class action lawsuits just to get quick financial settlements. Regular people, they assure, will not lose their day in court.

Opponents say Bush and other bill supporters are trying to help businesses escape proper judgments for their wrongdoing — and also to hurt the trial lawyers who litigate the cases, some of whom are big Democratic contributors.

"Are there bad lawyers that bring meritless cases? Sure there are, and we should crack down on them," said Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid of Nevada, a former trial lawyer. "But this bill is not about punishing bad lawyers. It is about hurting consumers and helping corporations avoid liability for misconduct."

The bill's aim "is to make sure when companies are called on the carpet, when

they are involved in a class action litigation, they're in a court, in a courthouse with a judge where the companies have a fair shake, where the odds, the decks aren't stacked against them," said Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del.

Changing the legal system — including class action lawsuits, medical malpractice lawsuits and asbestos injury lawsuits — has been a priority of Bush and the business community.

"The reason why this bill is the highest priority of the Bush administration and the Republican leadership in Congress is because of one simple fact: Class action suits moved from state courts to federal court are less likely to go forward, to be tried, and they are less likely to reach verdict where someone wins or loses," said Senate Democratic Whip Richard Durbin, D-Ill. And if the plaintiffs win, businesses are "less likely to pay a reasonable amount of money in federal court than in state court."

The GOP-controlled Senate struck a deal with the House saying if senators passed the bill unchanged, representatives would approve the bill as-is and send it to the White House to be signed into law.

Senators fought off several Democratic amendments, including changes that would have blocked federal judges from throwing out complicated multistate class action lawsuits or would have exempted state attorneys general actions and civil rights cases from the bill's provisions.

HOPEFULS

Continued from page 1

education transfer student Victoria Moore wants to start a "buddy" acquaintance program that will help other transfer students assimilate to campus life.

"When I got here, I was overwhelmed," Moore, who transferred from USC-Salkhehatchie, said.

The new buddy acquaintance program, Moore said, would cost no new money for the university, but would include upperclassmen who want to volunteer.

Moore said she was also interested in starting programs for students to learn management of time, money and work schedules. She said monies from SG can go to various student causes.

"There are some good ideas that I just want to see the public at USC have," Moore said.

Equal distribution of funds, Moore said, would be a priority during her term, and she would earn it for students.

"I could say that I would lower tuition and make more parking spaces, but I can't do that right now," Moore said. "I can say though, that I am willing to help."

Tommy Preston

Second-year political science student Tommy Preston has served as an SG senator for the past two years. He said experience is what differentiates him from his opponents.

"I have seen how the system works, its problems and how to fix them," Preston said.

The Arts and Sciences senator served as chairman of the minority affairs committee in SG and as the lobbying and legislative affairs director for the S.C. State Student Association. He was elected to that statewide position in October.

"One big issue is advocacy, and as the lobbying and legislative affairs director for SCSSA, it will give students a voice for financial matters," Preston said.

As treasurer, Preston said he would help student organizations financially by creating a new office of comptrollers. He said the comptrollers would work directly with some student organizations to help with financing.

"This would make sure we work with them the entire semester," Preston said, "instead of the once-a-semester treasurer workshops that are in place now."

Preston said the campaigning he has done for the past two years has helped him realize what students want.

"I know how to work within the organization," Preston said. "I have lobbied the finance committee, all of the senate and occasionally the president."

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecocknews@gwm.sc.edu

LEARN ONE OF 21 LANGUAGES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

As a Soldier at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, you'll learn one of 21 languages. And you don't need to speak a foreign language to qualify.

>> Call Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Greene at 777-4812 about college loan repayment and more Army benefits. And see how you can become AN ARMY OF ONE.

>> Or talk to a Recruiter at the Lagare College, 902 Sumter Street in Columbia. Monday through Saturday 8:00 a.m. through 7:00 p.m.

or call toll free 877-254-3876



U.S. ARMY
AN ARMY OF ONE

GOARMY.COM ©2001. Paid for by the U.S. Army. All rights reserved.

What's your scholarship?



Scholarship
#239
Gymnast

Find your scholarship opportunities at our re-launched Scholarship Channel.

Visit www.dailygamecock.com

powered by:  **BrokeScholar**

MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA



The sky is the limit for health care professionals

College of Health Professions information sessions

- Learn about MUSC
- Receive detailed admissions information
- Get acquainted with the various professions and the faculty
- Attend a program-specific breakout session for one of the following:

Physical Therapy	Cardio Vascular Perfusion
Occupational Theory	Communication Sciences and Disorders
Cytotechnology	These programs include formats for working professionals:
Physical Assistant	Bachelor of Health Sciences
Anesthesia for Nurses	Master in Health Administration

MUSC Campus - Charleston, SC

February 23
RSVP by 2/22/05
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Gazes Building
Room 225
Corner of Courtenay and Doughty Streets

March 18
RSVP by 3/17/05
8:30 am - 1:00 pm
Harper Student Center Auditorium
Corner of Courtenay and Doughty Streets

TO RSVP OR FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL (843) 792 - 3326