

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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House Democrats Declare Victory

Columbia, SC--Minority Leader Harry Ott (D-Calhoun County), issued the following statement today on the end of the legislation session.

“As the 2005 legislative session ends, many good bills were passed. The House unanimously supported a state budget that allows us to provide the necessary services to the people of South Carolina, as well as, to place the State on firmer financial footing.

For the first time in many years, education has been a top funding priority. The budget is balanced; 40 of the 46 trust funds have being restored; Medicaid growth is adequately funded; some law enforcement officers receive a 10% pay increase; and state employees received a 4% increase. The state health insurance plan for State employees and retirees is fully funded with no premium increase or benefit reduction, and the more than 63,000 state retirees are guaranteed an annual cost-of-living increase,” stated Rep. Ott.

“South Carolina’s lawmakers passed legislation that strengthens domestic violence penalties.

The House Democratic Caucus was proactive in its focus to enhance and support economic development. The legislature supported the creation of a more business friendly environment with the business tort reform and medical malpractice legislation and by bringing real tax relief to South Carolina’s small business community. The 2005 Job Creation Act provides an income tax credit to small businesses and appropriates \$2.5 million to assist participating financial institutions making loans to small businesses.

Through all of our success, we still have a ways to go. The General Assembly must deal with property tax relief in a comprehensive manner. However, the citizens of South Carolina should be proud of both Democrats and Republicans this legislative year, concluded Ott.”

Tort Reform

Joint & Several

Statue of Repose and Improvements of Real Property from 13 to 8 years

Venue: residents of the injured party, corporation’s principle place of business or the place where the injury occurred

Frivolous Lawsuits

Attorney Advertising

Medical Mal considers “noneconomic damages” meaning damages arising from pain, suffering, physical impairments, disfigurement, etc.

The caps are as follows: single health care provider the limit of civil liability is limited to an amount not to exceed \$350,000.00; single health care institution, damages limited to an amount not to exceed \$350,000.00 for each claimant, more than one health care institution, or more than one health care provider or an combination thereof, limit damages for each is not to exceed \$350,000.00