

# Senate Republicans scuttle gun bill after losing vote

By Jesse J. Holland  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans scuttled an election-year bill to immunize the gun industry from lawsuits Tuesday after Democrats amended it to extend an assault weapons ban and require background checks on all buyers at private gun shows.

The National Rifle Association began pressuring senators to vote against the bill after Democrats won votes on the two key gun control measures. The 90-8 vote against the bill virtually ends any chance for gun legislation to make through Congress this year.

"I now believe it is so dramatically wounded that I would urge my colleagues to vote against it," said Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, the sponsor of the gunmaker immunity bill.

Democrats won close votes on their amendments to change the Republican legislation, a strategy aimed at pressuring the GOP-dominated House to accept the restrictions to gain passage of the gunmaker-immunity bill.

While Democrats won't get the gun ban extension and the gun show legislation, they called the vote a success. Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., said, "The immunity bill was a terrible bill. We're better off at the end of the day than we were at the beginning of the day."

Underlining the importance of the day to Democrats, presidential contenders John Kerry of Massachusetts and John Edwards of North Carolina broke away from the campaign trail to cast their first Senate votes of the year, joining the 52-47 majority on the assault weapons ban and the 53-46 majority on the gun show bill.

A dozen Republican senators voted for one or both of the provisions, allowing minority Democrats to gain victories on the amendments.

The House last year passed a bill to shield gunmakers and dealers from liability suits by crime victims. But Republican leaders in the House refused to allow a vote on continuing for another decade the assault weapons ban, which is to expire in September.

Democrats had hoped their victories in the Senate on gun shows and assault weapons would force Republicans to let the House also vote on them. But the White House said the two amendments would only kill the effort to immunize the

## The Senate defeats gun bill

Although the Senate voted Tuesday to extend the semi-automatic assault weapons ban, it is still scheduled to expire on Sept. 1 because the legislation it was attached to was defeated. The bill bans 19 specific weapons and their copies and semi-automatic pistols and rifles with a detachable ammunition magazine and more military style features.

### Banned semiautomatic weapons



Rifles with at least two features such as a folding or telescopic stock, pistol grip, bayonet mount, flash suppressor.

### Specifically excluded weapons

- A list of 670 rifles and shotguns
- Those made before Sept. 13, 1994
- Guns made for use or experimentation by the federal government

SOURCE: U.S. Senate

gun industry from lawsuits.

"Some are simply more interested in undoing that piece of legislation than they are in necessarily getting the other legislation passed," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said Tuesday.

On the final roll call, only three Republicans voted for the bill: Sens. George Voinovich of Ohio, John McCain of Arizona and Richard Lugar of Indiana. Democrats who voted for the package were Minority Leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota and Sens. Mark Pryor of Arkansas, John Breaux of Louisiana, Joe Lieberman of Connecticut and Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas.

"While we will continue to work to save the U.S. firearms industry, we have said from the start that we would not allow this bill to become a vehicle for added restrictions on the law-abiding people of America," NRA Vice President Wayne LaPierre Jr. said after the vote.

The gunmaker-immunity package was an election-year priority for the White House, congressional Republicans and other conservative groups as well as the NRA. All contend the gun industry is being sued out of existence for making a legal product though gun manufacturers have yet to lose a lawsuit.

the spring bridal event  
march 26 & 27

widest selection  
original designs  
exceptional service



extended hours  
expanded inventory  
special financing

Call for your appointment today!

DAVID GARDNER'S  
JEWELERS + GEMOLOGISTS

the ring source for hopeful couples  
come in, get comfortable and make her dreams come true

Visit the store at 522 University Drive E.  
(Between the Suit Club and Audio Video)  
Call 979-764-8786 for an appointment.

BRAZOSPORT COLLEGE

www.brazosport.edu

BC wants to be your college of choice.

### CONVENIENT

Choose BC for affordable academic

### COST-EFFECTIVE

transfer programs, job skills training, and

### COMPREHENSIVE

cultural enhancement. Our outstanding

### CUSTOMER-ORIENTED

faculty and staff are ready to help make

### COMPETITIVE

your choice of BC a choice for success.

THE CHOICE

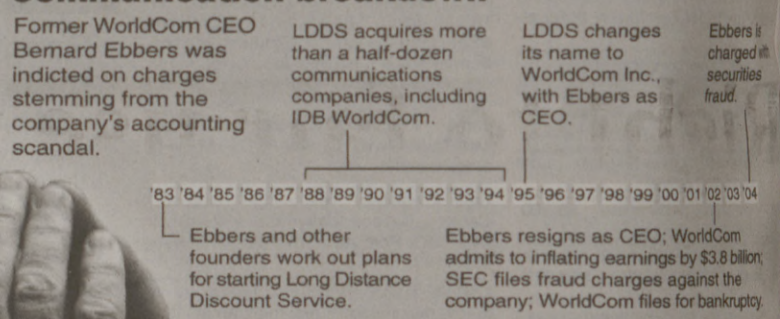
Register On-Line  
www.brazosport.edu



BRAZOSPORT COLLEGE  
O.A.S.I.S  
ONLINE ACCESS STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

979-230-3000  
500 College Drive • Lake Jackson 77566

## Communication breakdown



SOURCE: Associated Press

# Former WorldCom chief Ebbers charged with securities fraud

By Larry Neumeister  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Former WorldCom CEO Bernard Ebbers was charged Tuesday with falsifying the books at the long-distance company in the biggest corporate fraud case in American history, and his chief financial officer pleaded guilty and agreed to testify against him.

Ebbers was accused in a federal indictment of taking part in a scheme to falsely inflate earnings by \$11 billion. He was charged with securities fraud, conspiracy and making false filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Former chief financial officer Scott Sullivan agreed to plead guilty to the same charges and cooperate with prosecutors in hopes of reducing a potential 25-year prison sentence.

"I took these actions, knowing they were wrong, in a misguided effort to preserve the company to

allow it to withstand what I believed were temporary financial difficulties," Sullivan, 42, of Boca Raton, Fla., said in court.

In a steady voice, Sullivan said he was motivated to plead guilty by "sincere remorse and a deep sense of contrition."

Ebbers, 62, of Brookhaven, Miss., was to be arraigned Wednesday.

Ebbers resigned from WorldCom in April 2002, well after its stock price had begun a steady decline and soon after questions began to swirl about the company's finances amid a slew of corporate scandals.

Two months later, WorldCom announced it had uncovered nearly \$4 billion in hidden expenses — the beginning of a spiral that would uncover a fraud now estimated at \$11 billion, the biggest in U.S. history.

Attorney General John Ashcroft announced the indictment in New York, saying, "America's economic strength

depends on the integrity of the marketplace."

"No one," Ashcroft said, "stands above the law."

Ebbers' attorney, Reid Weingarten, said no "fair-minded jury" would conclude that client acted with criminal intent.

"We know the evidence in this case, we know our client and know that Bernie Ebbers sought to mislead investors, sought to improperly manipulate WorldCom's numbers, and improperly took any money never sought to hurt the company he built," he said in a statement.

Lawyers in the case said Sullivan had agreed to sell his lavish \$15 million Boca Raton estate, which has a movie theater and six Jacuzzis, and use proceeds to reimburse victims.

WorldCom, parent of MCI, the nation's second-biggest long-distance telephone company, filed for bankruptcy in 2002. WorldCom changed its name to MCI last April and moved headquarters from Mississippi to Ashburn, Va.

**SUPERCUTS®**  
**FREE HAIR CUTS**  
**SUPERCUTS**

SUPERCUTS Has Limited Appointments for FREE Haircuts by Licensed Cosmetologists. For More Information Call 696-1155 Today!