

To the Editor:

On May 8, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce held a press conference regarding Mississippi's legal system and their concerns about doing business in the state. This action by the Chamber is disturbing on several points.

The mere fact that the Chamber is singling out Mississippi, when the issue of tort reform is affecting states nationwide, is irresponsible. The Harris poll of corporate lawyers on state legal practices, so prominently referred to by the Chamber, listed Mississippi as one of several states with controversial tort reform issues. Targeting one state out of the list accomplishes nothing.

The Chamber is spending \$100,000 to advertise across the state about the issue of tort reform. They tried to tell the people of Mississippi how to vote in judicial elections, and now they are trying to tell us how to manage the legal system itself. They should save their money for someone who can be bought.

Chamber President and CEO Tom Donohue said "if Mississippi wants to attract more business, then Mississippians need to push for common-sense legal reforms now."

Here are some facts for Mr. Donohue: Figures from the Mississippi Development Authority show that more than \$6 billion has been invested in the state in the past two years, and more than 21,000 jobs have been created. Companies like Whirlpool, Alcoa and Milwaukee Electric are building or expanding facilities. Nissan is investing \$930 million in a new automotive plant and creating 4,000 new jobs. The state was one of four finalists for Hyundai's first North American plant. It seems to me that real businesses view Mississippi in a somewhat better light than Mr. Donohue and his followers.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is trying to erect a wall around Mississippi to keep business away, but it won't work. Their wall is paper-thin and anyone looking to move here will see right through it.

Mississippi is open for business.