

# Nation & World

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ROP

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## Briefly

AROUND THE WORLD

BURBANK, CALIF.

### Hope hospitalized with pneumonia

Bob Hope has been hospitalized with pneumonia but is responding favorably to treatment, his publicist said Wednesday.

The 98-year-old comedian admitted himself to Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center on Sunday after having difficulty breathing, according to his spokesman, Ward Grant.

Hope was diagnosed with "wild pneumonia" and is expected to stay at the hospital for several days, Grant said.

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA.

### University approves \$8.6M settlement

The University of Florida has agreed to pay \$8.6 million to end a government investigation into Medicare overbillings.

The settlement ends eight years of litigation that began with a whistle-blower's accusations that faculty doctors were improperly billing Medicare for care provided by less experi-

# Audit hits Freeman-Wilson

## Agency says grants by former attorney general broke law

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — State auditors say Indiana's former attorney general broke the law when she issued more than \$700,000 in grants last year without approval from the governor and two state agencies.

Auditors also uncovered sloppy or nonexistent record keeping and lax oversight of the grants and other spending during Karen Freeman-Wilson's 11-month tenure. The Indianapolis Star reported Wednesday.

Gov. Frank O'Bannon appointed Freeman-Wilson, a Democrat from Lake County, to the post in February 2000. She left office in January, after losing the November election to



Freeman-Wilson

found that Freeman-Wilson broke the law when she issued grants from the \$1.39 million payment Indiana received for work on the national tobacco settlement.

A \$500,000 grant to the Indiana Minority Health Coalition, which Freeman-Wilson called a payback for black Americans for being targeted by tobacco

Republican Stephen Carter.

The State Board of Accounts filed its routine audit of the attorney general's office this month. It

found that Freeman-Wilson broke the law when she issued grants from the \$1.39 million payment Indiana received for work on the national tobacco settlement. The deal wasn't approved until Jan. 5, 2001, the final business day before Freeman-Wilson left office. The contract was completed in such haste that one of her top aides, Lisa R. Hayes,

signed it on behalf of State Budget Director Betty Cockrum, without getting her approval. Hayes said the budget agency refused to approve the grant after some back-and-forth discussions. Hayes, whom O'Bannon recently appointed to run the Health Professions Bureau, said she signed off on the grant because "those were essentially our funds to use at our discretion."

Carter suggested that the anti-smoking campaign during the "Fever season" benefited Freeman-Wilson by boosting her name recognition.

Freeman-Wilson acknowledged mistakes were made in the office but said the grants went to worthwhile causes.

advertisements, was issued without approval from the governor and representatives of two state agencies under his control, as the law requires.

Freeman-Wilson's office also gave a \$213,200 grant to Ball State University to oversee a "Smoke-free Indiana" ad campaign featuring Indiana Fever players. The Fever sponsorship, featuring basketball players Stephanie McCarty and Kara Wolters, began in mid-2000, six months before a state contract was ever signed.

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Freeman-Wilson acknowledged mistakes were made in the office but said the grants went to worthwhile causes.

"I'm not going to criticize Mr. Carter, and I don't think he should criticize me," she told The Star in a telephone interview from Arlington, Va., where she is executive director of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals.

State Examiner Charles Johnson, who heads the office that conducted the audit, said the violations did not rise to a level that would require his agency to ask for the public funds to be repaid.

Carter said he doesn't think he has authority to demand repayment.

"We can only do so much," Carter said. "We can only clean up the office from this point forward."

## With drop in supply,



## Militia to put workers