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## Voices for Illinois Divestment from South Africa

Coalition for Illinois Divestment from South Africa

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# VOICES FOR ILLINOIS DIVESTMENT FROM SOUTH AFRICA

## ILLINOIS ELECTED OFFICIALS

"I am in full agreement with the intent of House Bill 569, as amended. I believe that this step, which is long overdue, will serve notice on the lending institutions of Chicago and the rest of the nation, that people here do not want any business dealings which support a government established and maintained by legalized racism. Representative Carol Moseley Braun is to be commended for introducing this legislation.

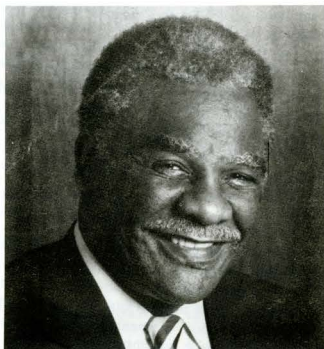
South Africa's government is controlled by a White minority of 4½ million people, who are subjugating a Black population of over 20 million, according to 1980 statistics.

We cannot, in good conscience, send our investment dollars to a nation which has no respect for the dignity of all of its citizens. To continue to do so, as we are presently doing, violates every fundamental principal of American democracy."

**Mayor Harold Washington**  
*City of Chicago*

"It is time to end Illinois pension fund investments in South Africa. We must prohibit state deposits in banks handling loans to South Africa as well. If all good citizens in Illinois would contact their state legislators, we could pass House Bill 569. In Congress, I and several other members of the House of Representatives are working on bills which would end the sale of nuclear and military technology to South Africa. We join you in the struggle to overcome apartheid."

**Congressman Paul Simon (D-IL, Makanda)**  
*U.S. House of Representatives*



*Mayor Harold Washington*

"In 1981-82 alone, over 300 trade unionists were arrested or detained by the South African government. Many of them were tortured and some, like Brother Neil Aggett, were killed.

We in the labor movement must demonstrate decisively that we will not tolerate having our money and the money of the people of Illinois being used to shore up a regime that systematically and brutally denies labor rights, political rights and human rights.

I urge you to give your full support to House Bill 569 calling for Illinois state pension funds to be divested from corporations and banks doing business in South Africa and be re-invested in job creating enterprises here in Illinois."

**Congressman Charles Hayes (D-IL)**  
*U.S. House of Representatives*

**Coalition for Illinois' Divestment from South Africa (CIDS)**

P.O. Box 578413 Chicago, Illinois 60657 312/666-9243 or 312/660-8671



"I support passage of House Bill 569 because divestment of Illinois pension funds from banks and corporations doing business in South Africa is morally and fiscally responsible. Investment in South Africa is not neutral. Rather it supports a racist system of apartheid, a morally reprehensible act. The reinvestment of Illinois pension funds in our state will spur the local economy and create jobs here at home. Lastly, the experience of other cities and states that have passed such measures conclusively shows that divestment does not harm the pension and investment portfolio; in fact, it often accounts for a greater rate of return."

**Alderman Danny Davis**  
*29th Ward, Chicago City Council*

"The only morality that some nations understand is the morality of economics. If it is so that the government of South Africa will abolish the apartheid form of government only at the hands of economic pressures and sanctions, then it shall be so. Thomas Jefferson warned us some 200 years ago that deep rooted racial prejudices could one day result in the extermination of one of the races. Before such a prophesy would be fulfilled, it is incumbent upon all governments which believe in the equality of man to impose that belief upon the minority of governments which do not. I support House Bill 569."

**Senator Philip Rock**  
*President, Illinois Senate*

"The South African government's practice of apartheid, which oppresses 80% of its population, is a clear violation of basic human rights and should be opposed privately and officially. To use public pension fund monies, or any public monies, to support companies doing business with South Africa is, I believe, unconscionable."

**Martin Oberman, Alderman**  
*43rd Ward, Chicago City Council*

"It is morally imperative that we, as citizens and as elected officials, take upon ourselves the task of making corporations who invest in South Africa responsible for their actions. Every penny that goes into the South African economy continues the oppressive system that enslaves millions of South Africans due only to the fact that they are not White. I do not believe that divestment of our state pension funds will negatively affect the return on investments. Furthermore, I see no proof that investment of state pension funds in South Africa has improved the lives of those who are needlessly suffering under the current regime. House Bill 569 is a long-overdue step that we must take in order to insure that the system of apartheid in South Africa is abolished."

**Susan M. McGrath, Board Member**  
*Champaign County Board*



*Representative Carol Moseley Braun*

"Divestment from South Africa is in the interest of all Illinois citizens. Our pension money should be used to create jobs in Illinois and not to support slavery in South Africa. I hope that we will join our effort to prohibit investment of Illinois dollars in apartheid."

**Representative Carol Moseley Braun**  
*Co-Sponsor, House Bill 569*

"Racism is against the public policy of Illinois and her taxpayers will not tolerate their money being used to support the economy of the most blatantly racist and repressive regime on earth."

**Representative Woods Bowman**  
*Co-Sponsor, House Bill 569*

"I have been a leader in Congress in fighting South Africa's apartheid policies and in supporting the divestment of U.S. investments in that country. It is clear that appealing to the morality of the South African government will not change their policies. Only economics will hit hard enough to make them change their racist policies. I recently found that the broker that makes my investment decisions had purchased some stocks in American companies that are doing business in South Africa. I am so firmly opposed to apartheid that I ordered these stocks to be sold."

**Representative Cardiss Collins**  
*U.S. House of Representatives*

## ILLINOIS CHURCH LEADERS

"The 350 American corporations conducting business in South Africa are aiding and abetting one of the most repressive systems in history. They are subverting the drive for self-determination and majority rule by providing technical know-how and other resources, not the least of which is hard currency, for the South African government. At the same time, the programs sponsored by those corporations to increase upward mobility and expand white collar employment for Blacks is cosmetic to the point of transparency. For one thing, such programs touch a minuscule number of workers. Secondly, the programs still leave much of the work force, even in American run industries, with wages 16 times less than those earned by Whites.

We must urge divestment as the only solution. There is no logical reason for pension funds with substantial Black and other non-White contributions to be invested in companies that are the economic muscle for a tyrannical government that legitimizes economic servitude if not slavery. An act on the part of the State legislature to force such divestment would be a certain blow for freedom in South Africa. Divestment means dignity for millions who must now languish in poverty, ignorance and disenfranchisement.

We urge all to write their representatives and to send wires of support to Rep. Carol Moseley Braun....Today, it is divestment in Illinois; tomorrow, freedom for South Africa."

**Reverend Jesse Jackson**  
*President on Leave, Operation PUSH*

"House Bill 569 takes seriously our need to affirm our social responsibility to eliminate racism wherever it exists. The bill to divest Illinois pension funds from South African investments is a specific and responsible way to express our moral rejection of South Africa's White supremacy laws and practices. The investment of these funds in Illinois can also assist our state economy where ethnic persons are underemployed and unemployed and facing increasing poverty.

**Bishop Jesse DeWitt, Northern Illinois**  
*Conference, United Methodist Church*

"In accordance with the consistent and clear position taken by the United Church of Christ over the past 27 years, we stand clearly opposed to "constructive engagement," excuses and rationales which prolong the United States and U.S. companies involvement with South Africa. We have long called for divestment not only of Illinois public pension funds, but of all companies and banks who do business with this apartheid and racist government. The church of South Africa was recently voted out of the Christian family because its theology is based on the heresy of racial supremacy, and it is my firm

belief that for us to continue to support that heretical teaching financially is the same as saying that our government supports the Ku-Klux-Klan!"

**Pastor Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr.**  
*Trinity United Church of Christ*

## ILLINOIS ANTI-NUCLEAR ACTIVISTS

"The movements for disarmament and against apartheid cannot be separated. The American bomb and the apartheid bomb are both aimed at the struggle for peace and justice. We support Illinois House Bill 569 calling for divestment of Illinois public pension funds from apartheid South Africa."

**Disarm NOW Action Group**

"An examination of the military, economic and political context of the nuclear arms race shows the connection between our work for a freeze and issues of economic and social justice. The effort to divest state funds from corporations doing business in South Africa is such an issue of economic and social justice."

**Bernice Bild, Executive Director**  
*Illinois Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign*

## ILLINOIS COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS

"U.S. investments in South Africa are a prime example of "runaway shops," the patterns of corporate and financial flight away from U.S. communities to countries where labor is exploited while unemployment, hunger, homelessness and labor powerlessness increase at home. U.S. corporations earn high profits and prop up exploitive governments which cannot work, like the South African apartheid regime. We demand the end to such practices and endorse House Bill 569."

**Gail Cincotta, Chairperson**  
*National Peoples' Action*

"The Illinois Public Action Council is on record opposing apartheid. Not only is it unconscionable to support a racist government but doing it with public monies which are so desperately needed for the Illinois economy is an affront to every unemployed person in Illinois."

**Jan Schakowski, Program Director,**  
*Illinois Public Action Council (IPAC)*



## ILLINOIS LABOR UNIONS

"South Africa's official racism denies Black workers their basic rights. Illinois public employees oppose the investment of their pension funds in corporations that do business in South Africa and the depositing of pension funds in banks that make loans to South Africa. AFSCME wholeheartedly supports House Bill 569 which will divest these pension funds from South Africa."

**Steve Culen, Director, Council 30**  
*American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)*

"The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists wholeheartedly supports House Bill 569 because we feel that any state funds that are invested in South Africa strengthen the apartheid government. Economic sanction is a viable method for bringing pressure on the economic structure of South Africa. As Black Americans, we feel that apartheid is modern day slavery and we have both a moral and historical responsibility to oppose this last bastion of racism on the African continent."

**Harold Rogers, Executive Secretary,**  
*Coalition of Black Trade Unionists*

"As a union, the Champaign Federation of Teachers cannot support the investment of money from the teachers' pension fund or any pension fund in South Africa where Black unions are controlled by the government and all Black Africans must live and work under apartheid. As teachers, we have a responsibility to know how our money is used and to support only an appropriate investment of our money. An investment in institutionalized racism is inappropriate and unacceptable. We urge the state to divest the pension funds from South Africa through House Bill 569."

**Mike Woods, President 1983-84**  
*Champaign Federation of Teachers,*  
*American Federation of Teachers, Local 1925*

"We in SUBS are urging our union brothers and sisters in the Chicago Teachers Union to support divestment as we are supporting the divestment of our own pension money from corporations doing business in South Africa. There is no excuse for a union to support South Africa directly or indirectly. The government of South Africa is the enemy of everything our union stands for: economic justice, racial equality, political democracy. As teachers we have a special responsibility to speak and act in defense of justice. Divestment is the only course we can take."

**George N. Schmidt, President,**  
*Substitutes United for Better Schools*

"On September 14, 1983, the assembled delegates of the Twin City Federation of Labor voted unanimous support for House Bill 569. Because of our desire to control how our pension money is spent, because of our solidarity with working men and women in South Africa, and because of our appreciation (and indeed our thirst) for simple justice, we urge the Legislature to adopt House Bill 569."

**Neil E. Dietz, President**  
*Twin City Federation of Labor*

## SOUTH AFRICANS

"As a Black South African, I add my voice to the many other Black South African leaders who are calling for an end to foreign investments in our country. This foreign money gives the White apartheid regime the economic and psychological security it needs to continue exploiting over 80% of the population. With divestment legislation pending in over 20 U.S. states, the passage of House Bill 569 will indicate Illinois' leadership on this crucial issue and will constitute the largest divestment measure to date."

**Professor Dennis Brutus**  
*Department of English, Northwestern University*

