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news release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAUNTROY CO-SPONSORS ANTI-APARTHEID ACT OF 1986

Today, at a press conference on Capitol Hill, Congressman Walter E. Fauntroy, Co-Chair of the Free South Africa Movement Steering Committee, announced his co-sponsorship of the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. His statement appears below:

I am pleased to join with my colleagues in the House and Senate as an original co-sponsor of the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986.

The raids a couple of days ago by the South African armed forces on the neighboring states of Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana is yet another example of terrorist acts commissioned by a government that thrives on violence. It further illustrates that the South African government, unchecked and unbridled, will pursue any means necessary to maintain their system of labor control and repression. This escalation of violence, spilling over more viciously on the front-line states, demands an escalation in our efforts in the United States to impose stronger sanctions on South Africa.

The raids followed on the heels of the shocking pre-dawn arrest on May 16th of Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, the Secretary General of the Southern African Catholics Conference. Father Mkhathshwa's arrest and charge is part of an insidious trend in South Africa, where the government is seeking to kill the inevitable revolution by eliminating proponents of change. History well records that such an approach is doomed to fail. Stronger sanctions by the United States and other nations of conscience is the only non-violent tool available to us. We can no longer patiently wait for Pretoria to progress.

The bill which we introduce today, strikes at the very heart of the system we all deplore. By banning new investments, we send a clear, crisp message that American business will not be used to buttress apartheid. By eliminating bank loans to South Africa's private sector, we combine with the previously imposed ban on public sector loans and make clear that American money will not flow so long as blood continues to needlessly flow in South Africa. Under our bill, no South African airline will be allowed landing rights in the United States. In addition, we disallow the importation of uranium, coal and steel.

Not only do these products help to fund apartheid, but they also cause jobs to be lost in America because South Africa's cheap labor system can market the products more competitively. We also forbid the involvement of contracts or any form of commitment with respect to expansion of energy in South Africa. Taken together, these sanctions can have an impact in South Africa.

In our bill, we give the government of South Africa a way out.

The sanctions we impose can be immediately lifted if two things occur: First, the release of Nelson Mandela and secondly, initiation of good faith negotiations between the government of South Africa and responsible South African Black leadership. But if the South African government does not take advantage of this road to a peaceful, non-violent settlement, within one year of enactment of our bill, we provide for a complete pull out of U.S. computer companies.

This bill is strong medicine for a seriously ailing country. There is stronger medicine that could send an even clearer message to South Africa, complete U.S. divestment now, but legislation on that order would have difficulty passing the House and Senate. The Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 is a responsible initiative given political and legislative realities.

The state of emergency may have been lifted in South Africa in early March, but the emergency state in that bullet-ridden country remains. The situation is perhaps more urgent than it has ever been. The Botha regime has deepened its resolve to stay in power at all costs, and the Black majority has deepened its resolve to be free. These two opposite and irreconcilable attitudes are on a collision course. The United States, by standing for justice and equality can make a difference. We will carry that message to the House and Senate.