

NEWS

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CROCKETT DISAPPROVES DETROIT RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB'S PLANS TO HOST SOUTH AFRICANS

Congressman George W, Crockett, Jr. (D-Michigan), in a recent letter to J. Richard Ray, President of the Detroit Rugby Football Club, declared his opposition to the Rugby Football Club's involvement with all rugby teams from South Africa. In the letter, Congressman Crockett stated that he felt that it was inappropriate at this time for any U.S. sports team to compete with South African teams in light of growing domestic repression within South Africa and the inappropriate responses of the Reagan administration to the situation in that region of the world.

Over the past few years, the Detroit Rugby Football Club has hosted two private rugby football teams from South Africa. Last summer the Detroit Rugby Football Club visited South Africa. The club is planning to host a team from South Africa this fall.

In the letter to Mr. Ray, Congressman Crockett stated that increased repression within South Africa is evidenced by "massive arrests of black and white labor union reformers, an accelerated policy of committing blacks to impoverished homelands, increased bannings and detentions, repeated military incursions into Angola, and a steady refusal on the part of the South African government to resolve the Namibia imbroglio."

Congressman Crockett additionally noted that the Reagan administration has abetted South African repression by adopting a "position of studied neutrality" on issues concerning South Africa and the U.S., and by characterizing South Africa as an "'ally,' 'friendly country,' and most incredibly, a 'democracy'; despite the fact that Pretoria denies by government fiat the clear majority of its black, colored, and Indian residents even a modicum of economic and political equality."

In conclusion, the Congressman noted that any sports exchange between the Detroit Rugby Football Club and South Africa at this time "would only further confirm and promote the present administration's untimely, unwarranted, and growing cordiality with South Africa," and would be a totally inappropriate gesture in light of South Africa's increasingly repressive racial policies.