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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, August 9, 1985

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CROCKETT URGES MICHIGAN GOVERNOR TO SUPPORT BILLS WITHDRAWING PENSION FUNDS FROM COMPANIES OPERATING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Washington, D.C. -- Congressman Geo. W. Crockett, Jr. (D-Michigan) has urged Michigan Governor James Blanchard to support and to endorse publicly the legislative effort in the State House of Representatives to remove \$2 billion in state pension funds from U.S. companies doing business in South Africa.

In a letter sent to Governor Blanchard earlier this week, Congressman Crockett and seven other Michigan Congressmen asserted that two House Bills, which would require the State's major public employee pension funds to divest those securities in corporations operating in South Africa, deserved the Governor's fullest support:

"...We feel that this legislation is an important and effective vehicle by which the residents of our State can demonstrate their abhorrence to the pernicious system of apartheid, and we strongly urge you to give it your public endorsement and support...."

The proposed legislation, House Bills 4770 and 4771, would cover those securities held by the State Employees' Retirement System, the Public School Employees' Retirement System, and the Legislative Retirement System. It would phase in divestiture over five years.

Congressman Crockett, who is a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, was one of the conferees who formulated the House-Senate agreement on the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1985, which passed overwhelmingly in the House of Representatives on August 1, 1985. Joining him in the letter to Governor Blanchard were Congressmen John Conyers, Howard Wolpe, David Bonior, Bob Traxler, Sander Levin, Dennis Hertel and Dale Kildee.

A copy of the letter to Governor Blanchard is reprinted on the reverse side.

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

August 2, 1985

The Honorable James Blanchard
Governor, State of Michigan
State Capitol
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Blanchard:

Both Houses of the United States Congress have overwhelmingly passed legislation calling for the imposition of economic sanctions against South Africa if that country does not end its racist system of apartheid.

This bipartisan, Congressional action comes in response to the growing national concern over the increased repression against the black South African populace and the recent South African raids into Angola and Botswana. It is also an acknowledgement that the Administration's policy of "constructive engagement" has failed to convince the Pretoria regime to initiate peaceful reforms that would guarantee basic human rights for all South Africans.

In the past seven months, as clashes between the police and black demonstrators in South Africa have intensified, cities and states at an increasing pace have enacted laws to dissociate themselves from investments in South Africa. Twenty-four cities and towns, from Rahway, New Jersey to East Lansing, Michigan, have passed such laws so far. Six states have approved similar measures, and 27 states are considering bills.

As you know, two bills have been introduced in the Michigan House of Representatives which would require the State's major public employee pension funds to divest those securities in corporations operating in South Africa. The proposed legislation, House Bills 4770 and 4771, would cover those securities held by the State Employees' Retirement System, the Public School Employees' Retirement System and the Legislative Retirement System. It would phase in divestiture over five years.

We feel that this legislation is an important and effective vehicle by which the residents of our State can demonstrate their abhorrence to the pernicious system of apartheid, and we strongly urge you to give it your public endorsement and support.

Michigan has been in the forefront of American concern over apartheid. The State has led the way in mandating that public university funds not be invested in corporations operating in South Africa and that no state funds be put in banks making loans to the Pretoria regime. Now these two important House bills not only continue this leadership, but they also serve to increase the international pressure on South Africa to seek a real and peaceful change now.

Your support is essential to this effort.

Sincerely,

Geo. W. Crockett, Jr.
Howard Wolpe
John Conyers, Jr.
Dennis Hertel
David Bonior
Bob Traxler
Sander Levin
Dale E. Kildee
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

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