SUPPORT FOR THE MACBRIDE PRINCIPLES

AND

SUPPORT FOR AN END TO SOUTH AFRICAN APARTHEID

Testimony by
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Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
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Legalized terror and gross violations of human rights are standard behavior in two countries over which the United States wields considerable diplomatic and economic leverage: Northern Ireland and the so-called "Republic" of South Africa.

In the six counties that generally are known as Northern Ireland, Catholics suffer one of the highest unemployment rates of any industrialized land. The Protestant majority that controls the six counties subjects Irish Catholics to arbitrary arrest and detention; to discrimination in employment and housing, and prohibits their free and equal participation in all important aspects of social, economic and political life.

The Connecticut State AFL-CIO condemns the oppression of Irish Catholics and we urge the legislature to endorse and adhere to the principles set forth by Irish human rights activist Sean MacBride.

The "MacBride Principles" require all employers in Northern Ireland to actively seek an end to anti-Catholic discrimination in hiring, training, promotion and treatment on the job.

We urge the state of Connecticut to divest itself of all stocks in corporations operating in Northern Ireland which fail to adhere to these Principles.

We also condemn in the strongest possible terms the savage and inhuman oppression of black men and women by the white minority government of South Africa.

The racist South African government recently barred all photographs of police actions. But that bar could not erase what people throughout the world already had seen: black men, women
and children being whipped, attacked by dogs, arrested and mutilated for peacefully demanding freedom in their own land; people denied the right to vote; detained and removed from their homes without warning or cause; people forced to dwell in vast shanty towns, apart from their loved ones, while they labor in the mines and mills to enrich an already fabulously-wealthy white elite.

No government since Nazi Germany has so devoted itself to the sick notion of white supremacy. And no government since Nazi Germany has so deserved the condemnation of civilized people throughout the world.

The state of Connecticut should not allow one penny of its funds to support this despicable system, where fewer than six million whites rule over 21 million blacks and four million Asians and people of "mixed race."

We join with the black trade unions of South Africa in urging the imposition of total economic sanctions against South Africa, until serious negotiations aimed at dismantling the system of apartheid commence between representatives of the government and freely-elected representatives of the black majority.

We urge the state of Connecticut to support a boycott of all South African goods and to take immediate steps to divest itself of all holdings in corporations doing business in South Africa.