PRESS RELEASE

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PROMINENT ECONOMIST SPEAKS OUT AGAINST APARTHEID

Shearson/American Express Vice-President, Dr. Robert Schwartz, warns that public pension funds invested by American firms in South Africa may be in jeopardy.

Schwartz, a specialist in socially responsible investments, recently testified before the Subcommittee of Fiscal Affairs and Health of the House District of Columbia Committee about the financial ramifications and moral implications of divestment of public monies from companies doing business in South Africa.

Dr. Schwartz cited numerous studies "that document the statistical fact that...." divestment often results in a greater rate of return for pension and investment portfolios.

Schwartz cautioned that ".... firms with large fixed investments (in South Africa) face the risk that armed conflict in the country will destroy property and have a negative impact on earnings."

Concluding his testimony, Dr. Schwartz said, "... a decision about divestment should not be cluttered by arguments in regard to investment performance, but be based upon the political, moral issues and ... whether the decision makers believe that divestment will have an effect on ending the system of apartheid."

A Lobby Day will be held in Springfield on April 4 to support House Bill 569, which requires divestment of the $2.5 billion in state-employee
pension funds currently invested in banks and companies doing business in South Africa and provides for reinvestment of those funds in Illinois job-developing enterprises. The bill is scheduled for vote in the Illinois House in mid-April.

Lobby Day will mark the sixteenth anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination and will be a fitting tribute to his memory. It will be the culmination of two weeks of national anti-apartheid action, and will include a press conference hosted by Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan and a presentation for legislators given by the Bill's sponsors, Representatives Carol Moseley Braun and Woods Bowman.

The Coalition for Illinois' Divestment from South Africa (CIDSA) is sponsoring the event, which will be attended by over 200 organizations and individuals.

CIDSA urges people to add their voice to those of Gail Cincotta, Steve Culen, Alderman Danny Davis, The Reverend Jesse Jackson, Congressman Paul Simon, Mayor Harold Washington, and the many other elected officials, labor, church, and community leaders who have publicly endorsed this Bill.

The Reverend Jesse Jackson summarized the importance of support for House Bill 569 as follows: "We must urge divestment as the only solution.... An act on the part of the State legislature to force such divestment would be a certain blow for freedom in South Africa."

Buses will leave for Springfield on the 4th from downtown and near southside locations. For information call CIDSA office at 666-9243.