April 17, 1979

Dear Friends,

On April 9th the House of Representatives defeated by 10 votes a surprise amendment calling on the President to send observers to the April elections in Rhodesia and to give $20 million in aid to the elected government.

This vote shows that Congress is not yet prepared to jump in with both feet to back the internal settlement. The narrow margin of victory also shows that we have every reason to work now to stop further conservative moves to lift sanctions against Rhodesia.

We are therefore asking you to give special priority in the next month to influencing your Congressional representatives' position on Rhodesian sanctions. We can't afford to let the United States become directly involved in supplying money and arms to the unpopular minority regime in Rhodesia.

Here is what you can do in the next month:

1) Send your own letters in support of sanctions to your two Senators and Representative now. Ask them to commit themselves to keeping sanctions. New members are especially important.

2) At every meeting, film showing, or discussion group encourage others to write their own letters. Provide a sample letter and plain paper, but encourage people to express their own thoughts. You can probably get it done right then.

3) Organize a delegation of key representatives from local groups to meet with your representatives when they are in their local offices, especially at the Easter and Memorial Day recesses.

4) Tell us what you find out. Your reports can help our lobbying in Washington.

Enclosed is an organizing packet to use to get others involved.

- The one-page leaflet is a simple resource for the person who may never have heard of Rhodesian sanctions before. It is camera-ready, so you can print locally as many copies as you need, with your organization's address listed as the local contact. Or just order more copies from us, for only 4¢ a piece for more than 50 copies.

- The letter to President Carter shows the breadth of national support for maintaining sanctions. It might give you suggestions for people and groups in your community to work with on sanctions. It is also a good basis for a letter to members of Congress, with added points on the dangers of lifting sanctions (taken from the leaflet). Try to get prominent people in your area to send a joint letter to your Senators and Representative. Be sure it gets press coverage too.
The Back Talk! sheet on the media gives suggestions and models for how to influence local print and electronic media.

Don't hesitate to ask for other resources if you need them. We have: an analysis of the internal settlement, a write-up on the new constitution, a summary of continued repression inside the country, pamphlets on media distortions and the cold war politics of Zimbabwe, and a "swing list" of the key House and Senate votes.

Here is the current legislative situation: Under existing law (the "Case-Javits amendment"), the President must lift sanctions if he determines that the Rhodesian elections have been "free" and open to all political and population groups, and that Rhodesia has been willing to negotiate at an all-parties conference. President Carter will probably make a determination by the end of May, after the full election process is completed. If he decides in the negative, conservatives will try to get the Congress to lift sanctions immediately and unconditionally.

They aren't telling us their strategy, but Senate conservatives are expected to propose the lifting of sanctions as a floor amendment to a major foreign policy bill which Carter will find it hard to veto — like legislation implementing the Panama Canal treaty, a defense bill, the Middle East arms package or one of the foreign aid bills. We expect this Senate floor action towards the end of May. House action would probably follow very soon thereafter, so we need to work now on both the House and Senate.

We will send you legislative updates as soon and as often as we can, when more information becomes available. If you are not already on our mailing list, send us your name and address so we can keep you informed.

Thank you for your assistance on this important southern Africa issue.

Sincerely,

Ted Lockwood Sr. Janice McLaughlin

Maghan Keita Christine Root

SAMPLE LETTER

DEAR SENATOR / REPRESENTATIVE:

WE STRONGLY URGE YOU TO VOTE AGAINST ANY MOVES TO LIFT SANCTIONS AGAINST RHODESIA.

THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT REGIME HAS NOT MET THE CONGRESS' CONDITIONS FOR THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS. THE APRIL ELECTIONS WERE NOT FREE AND OPEN TO ALL POLITICAL PARTIES. 85% OF THE COUNTRY IS UNDER MARTIAL LAW. SECURITY FORCES AND PRIVATE ARMIES HAVE BEEN TERRORIZING AFRICANS INTO VOTING FOR MONTHS. AFRICAN VOTERS WERE NOT REGISTERED, LEAVING THE WAY OPEN TO FRAUD. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT PARTIES ARE BANNED; THE MEDIA CANNOT EVEN MENTION THEIR NAMES. BEIDES, 97% OF THE POPULATION IS BEING ASKED TO VOTE UNDER A CONSTITUTION THEY NEVER RATIFIED.

LIFTING SANCTIONS WOULD BE A DISASTROUS STEP FOR U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. IT WILL END ANY ROLE THE U.S. COULD PLAY AS MEDIATOR IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. IT WILL COST THE UNITED STATES INFLUENCE AND CREDIBILITY IN BLACK AFRICAN STATES. IT WILL NOT END THE WAR IN RHODESIA. INSTEAD, IT WILL PUT U.S. DOLLARS AND ARMS IN THE HANDS OF ANOTHER UNPOPULAR REGIME AT WAR WITH ITS OWN PEOPLE, AS IN IRAN AND VIETNAM.