

**LORI GANS TESTIMONY OF THE ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE
IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL NO. 1474
“AN ACT RELATIVE TO PENSION DIVESTMENT”**

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICES
March 29, 2007**

Chairman Kaufman, Chairman Downing, members of the Committee, My name is Lori Gans, and I am a member of the New England regional board of the Anti-Defamation League. With me today is Robert Trestan, Eastern States Civil Rights Counsel. On behalf of Andy Tarsy, Regional Director, and Jim Rudolph our Board Chair, I am here today to express our strong support for Senate Bill 1474.

The Anti-Defamation League was founded in 1913 with a mandate to fight the defamation of the Jewish people and secure justice and fair treatment for all. ADL has been combating anti-Semitism and bigotry of all kinds ever since. Today ADL is one of the country's leading civil rights organizations.

ADL is deeply concerned with and outraged by the ongoing tragedy in Darfur and is part of coalitions calling upon communities to take actions to urge the United States government and the international community to help stop the genocide in Darfur and provide humanitarian assistance to the victims of the genocide.

As an organization whose goals include safeguarding the Jewish people, ADL is all too familiar with genocide. With witnesses to the Holocaust thankfully still living among us, we are reminded that it is our moral duty to do all that is in our power to stop genocide, wherever it arises, and whoever the targeted people are. The catch phrase of “never again” is more than just a slogan to us, and it means more than just stopping another Holocaust against the Jews – it means putting a stop to all genocide.

The crisis in Darfur is an extreme case, because as in the Holocaust, the government is responsible for a genocidal campaign against part of its own population. The Janjaweed militia has brutally murdered tens of thousands of civilians in Darfur, with the encouragement and active support of the Sudanese government. Two and half million people – almost half of Darfur's total population of 6 million – have been forced from their homes into internal camps and other squalid places of refuge. Another 300,000 Sudanese have fled to neighboring Chad, where most are subject to unimaginable living conditions. More than 400,000 people have died from violence, disease and other conditions related to forced displacement and insufficient access to humanitarian assistance.

To date, no one has been able to stop this genocide, despite various efforts. A targeted approach to divestment along with intensive diplomatic efforts would

deprive the Sudanese government of the resources that enable it to continue the genocide and would exert significant pressure on the government of Sudan to change its behavior. Recently, a number of states, including California, Illinois, Oregon, New Jersey, Maine, and Connecticut, have passed legislation calling for state funds to be divested from Sudan.

At present, a campaign is underway in more than 75 cities, states, and universities, calling for a targeted divestment of funds from companies doing business with the Sudanese government. Already, dozens of universities and cities, including Brown University and the city of Philadelphia, have divested from Sudan using this approach.

This bill represents an opportunity for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to both take a stand against genocide and play a role in stopping the conflict.

Genocide continues in Darfur today despite many attempts to bring peace to the region. With no other alternative appearing to be effective, targeted divestment is a critical next step to stop the genocide. On behalf of the ADL, I urge you to act favorably on Senate Bill No. 1474.