

December 7, 1982

Dr. Harold Shapiro
President, The University
of Michigan,
Administration Building
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48109

Dear President Shapiro:

As an alumnus of the University of Michigan, PhD, Administration of Higher Education, 1960, and a Michigan taxpayer, I am ashamed and outraged that the University has chosen to lobby with the South African Consulate against HB4553, the Bill to prevent Michigan educational institutions from investing in corporations operating in South Africa.

The University's Vice President for State Relations, Richard Kennedy's argument to members of the Michigan Senate that educational institutions should not be selected for divestment before State divestment, disregards the responsibility of educational institutions to be examples of the values they teach under the United States Constitution.

The argument that the State of Michigan will suffer because of divestment is not valid. If the capital invested by educational institutions in corporations operating in South Africa were withdrawn and re-invested in state and local industries not operating in South Africa, the disincentive to out state companies to move to Michigan would be largely nullified. In addition, if the vast sums invested by those Michigan corporations in South Africa were, instead, brought back to Michigan, our State would have a much sounder financial base.

The Sullivan Principles recommended by the University as an amendment to HB4553, are worse than no bill at all. They pertain only to working conditions and not to basic freedoms of full citizenship of non-white South Africans, including the right to vote, to buy or own land, or travel freely within their country without pass-books, or equal protection under the law. The Sullivan Principles only give an illusion of progress. They also pertain only to the 1% of the black work force employed by United States corporations. The very fact that the Sullivan Principles are acceptable to the apartheid South African government should be evidence enough for any perceptive institution to realize they are meaningless.

As a taxpayer, I do not want my tax money, which supports our Michigan educational institutions, to support those institutions that, through their investments support the brutal apartheid system in South Africa.

As an alumnus, I strongly request you to take immediate action to stop the lobbying efforts of the University against HB4553. Also, please share my concerns with the Board of Regents and inform me as to what action may be initiated.

Sincerely,

Harris F. Beeman
Harris F. Beeman
234 Spartan Ave.
East Lansing, Michigan
48823