Mr. Speaker,

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 180, the

Darfur Accountability and Divestment Act of

2007, introduced by my colleague Ms. LEE of

California, of which I am a co-sponsor.

Mr. Speaker, Darfur, where the fIrst genocide

of the 20th century rages, remains the

worst humanitarian situation we face today.

Since the crisis began in 2003, an estimated

400,000 people have been killed by the Government

of Sudan and its Janjaweed allies.

Additionally, over 2,000,000 people have been

displaced from their homes and livelihoods,

many of whom are still either internally displaced

within Darfur or are in refugee camps

across the border in Chad. Both the House of

Representatives and the Senate declared that

the atrocities in the Darfur region of Sudan

constitute genocide in July 2004, and the

Bush administration reached the same conclusion

in September 2004.

And yet, three years later, the humanitarian

situation in Darfur continues to decline. As attacks

on international aid organizations continue

to mount, the numbers of humanitarian

relief workers active in the area are sharply

declining. During the first three months of

2007, 21 humanitarian vehicles were hijacked,

15 additional vehicles were looted, and gunmen

raided 6 humanitarian compounds. In the

12 months preceding April 2007, the number

of humanitarian relief workers in Darfur decreased

by 16 percent, largely due to security

concerns, restriction on access, and funding

limitations. The flow of humanitarian aid has

been severely threatened by the escalating violence

in the region.

Divestment is one solid and easy way that

individuals, organizations, businesses, universities,

cities, and states can not only make a

strong statement against genocide, but can

actually act to halt the killing in Darfur. This

legislation supports state, city, and university

efforts to divest funds from, or restrict investments

in, companies that conduct business

operations in Sudan. It directs the Securities

and Exchange Commission (SEC) to require

all companies trading in registered securities

that conduct business operations directly or

through parent or subsidiary companies in

Sudan to disclose the nature of such operations,

and the Government Accountability Office

(GAO) to investigate the existence and

extent of such companies’ Federal Retirement

Thrift Investment Board investments. The

State of Texas is one of a few states that has

moved to divert from Sudan. The time to act

is now. People are dying. I will be going to

Sudan soon to visit the people of Darfur—we

will visit aide workers and review the status of

the U.N. Peacekeepers and the status of

water and nutrition among the already brutalized

Darfurians. Again we must act to save

lives now.

This legislation also prohibits U.S. government

contracts with companies that conduct

business operations in Sudan, with exceptions

for companies with activities in southern

Sudan, related to the implementation of the

2006 Darfur Peace agreement, those providing

military equipment to the African Union

or the U.N. in Darfur, and those providing humanitarian

aid. Targeted financial policies of

this sort ensure that they will have the maximum

impact on the government of Sudan,

while minimizing any negative effect on innocent

Sudanese civilians.

While U.S. law already prohibits American

companies from directly operating in Sudan,

they may still invest in foreign companies operating

in Sudan, including many that are directly

involved in supporting the genocide.

Americans who invest in these American companies

are, without their knowledge, financing

Sudan’s killing fields. As this bill explicitly

states, ‘‘No American should have to worry

that his or her investments or pension money

was earned in support of genocide.’’ However,

we must engage with China to encourage it to

stop supporting actions in Sudan that lead to

genocide.

Divestment has historically proven an effective

tool to alter unjust and persecutory policies.

In 1986, it was targeted against companies

that conducted business operations in

South Africa, and it played a critical role in

ending the apartheid regime. By the time free

elections took place in 1994, large numbers of

American States, counties, cities, and universities

had adopted divestment policies.

Similarly, divestment has become an increasingly

popular option in the current case

of genocide in Sudan. I am proud that my

home State of Texas is one of the growing

numbers of States, cities, and universities to

approve divestment. At last count, 9 cities, 16

States and 54 universities had passed legislation

to ensure that their money does not go to

finance the slaughter of innocent people in

Darfur. In addition, numerous religious organizations,

as well as countless individuals, have

divested. Since the Sudan divestment movement

began, companies including HC Helicopter,

ABB, Siemens, Rolls Royce, and

Schlumberger have halted or significantly altered

their operations in Sudan.

Divestment represents the leverage that ordinary

citizens and individual activists, as well

as States, cities, universities, and other organizations,

have to influence the Sudanese

government. It is the answer to the question

that so many of us active in the fight to end

genocide in Darfur hear too often: ‘‘What can

I, as an individual, do in the face of such overwhelming

and ongoing tragedy?’’

Mr. Speaker, the American people do not

support genocide in Sudan; their money

should not support these atrocities either. I

strongly urge my colleagues to join me in support

of this important legislation.