Mr. Speaker, earlier this

year, I had the opportunity to travel as part of

a bipartisan Congressional Delegation to the

war-torn nation of Sudan and see first-hand

one of the worst humanitarian crises in recent

times. As a nation dedicated to freedom and

the rights of the individual, the United States

has a responsibility to speak out when those

rights are violated, whether at home or

abroad.

Last week I traveled with the same bipartisan

delegation to the United Nations (U.N.)

to press U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

for immediate U.N. action in Darfur. It is apparent

that the U.N. is not moving fast enough

in ending this genocide. The entire world is

watching the U.N. actions in Darfur. In the

past, the U.N. has not adequately handled

genocide in other countries, most recently in

Rwanda, but this is an opportunity for the U.N.

to aid millions of people and bring about a real

and lasting change.

Many people share frustration with me that

the U.N. is not more effectively working to end

the genocide in Darfur. These people, who,

like me, are deeply concerned and troubled by

the deplorable situation in Darfur, want to

know what we can do to make a change in

Darfur.

This legislation gives us the tools to apply

economic leverage against Sudan to encourage

them to end the crisis in Darfur. H.R. 180,

The Darfur Accountability and Divestment Act

establishes a list of companies whose business

in Sudan is deemed to directly or indirectly

support the genocide. Furthermore this

legislation bans federal contracts with such

companies. This ensures that no federal dollars—

hard earned tax dollars of American

families—go to support one of the worst humanitarian

crises in recent history.

Private citizens can also look at the list of

companies whose business supports the

genocide, and use this list to make investment

decisions in their private lives. These people

can then be assured that none of their money,

whether through tax dollars or personal investments,

is being used to support the genocide

in Darfur.

Many States, including Virginia, have also

looked at legislation to divest from these companies.

H.R. 180 allows States and localities

to divest from these companies without fear of

lawsuits charging that States are regulating

foreign policy. This will protect several States

that have already taken the lead in divesting

in such companies, and States like mine that

are still considering this option on a State level

will know they can do so without fear of legal

charges.

This legislation is fairly balanced and does

not require individuals or States to take action,

but protects them if they so choose. Furthermore

this legislation would sunset these sanctions

when the genocide ends. I am proud to

be a cosponsor of this legislation, and I urge

my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill.

While I have never seen anything like what

I saw in Darfur, the situation is not completely

hopeless. The humanitarian assistance the

United States is providing is helping millions of

people in desperate circumstances. But we

must continue to do more, and we must urge

the international community to join with us to

bring an end to the genocide. Mr. Speaker, I

look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues

to bring an end to this international

crisis.