

**Testimony On Behalf Of The  
Connecticut Regional Office of the  
Anti-Defamation League**

**IN SUPPORT OF BILL NO. 5324**

**March 1, 2010**

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) was founded in 1913 with a mandate to fight the defamation of the Jewish people and secure justice and fair treatment for all. Today the ADL is one of the country's leading civil rights and human services organizations combating anti-Semitism and bigotry of all kinds. The Connecticut Regional Office of ADL is based in Hamden and serves the entire state of Connecticut.

We submit this testimony today to express our strong support for Bill No. 5324, An Act Concerning Divestment of State Funds Invested in Companies Doing Business in Iran and Sudan.

ADL believes that Iran – through its nuclear weapons program, extremism, and state-sponsorship of terrorism – is a grave threat not only to the United States but also to the rest of the world. Additionally, the anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli sentiments expressed by Iranian President Ahmadinejad have placed him and his regime among the foremost threats to Jews and Israel.

Iran has rebuffed international efforts to ascertain the extent and purpose of its nuclear program. By stonewalling the International Atomic Energy Agency for seven years and rejecting a series of United Nations Security Council resolutions ordering it to suspend its uranium enrichment program, Iran has indicated its blatant disregard for the will of the international community. A nuclear-armed Iran poses a threat to America's closest allies in the Middle East. Israel is most at risk as Iran's leaders have repeatedly declared that Israel should "be wiped from the map." America's Arab allies, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain, are already alarmed at Iran's aggressive regional policy and would feel increasingly threatened by a nuclear-armed Iran.

A nuclear-armed Iran would likely embolden Iran's already aggressive foreign policy, resulting in greater confrontations with the international community and support for extremists. Iran's nuclear program would likely spark a nuclear arms race in the Middle East that would further destabilize this volatile and vital region. Such a development would dramatically affect American interests.

Moreover, Iran continues to be the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism – providing arms, financial support, and training to terror groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas. Iran could potentially share its nuclear technology and know-how with extremist groups hostile to the United States and our allies.

At present, a national campaign is underway in cities, states, and universities calling for a targeted divestment of funds from companies doing business with Iran. Already, several states, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, and New Jersey, have divested from Iran using this approach. On January 28, 2010, the U.S. Senate passed the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act, echoing the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act that passed the House by a wide margin in December. In October, the House passed the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act, whose language authorizes states' divestment efforts and provides a safe harbor from lawsuit for asset managers that create losses due to divestment.

Bill 5324 sends a strong message that Connecticut does not endorse regimes that will not cooperate with the international community's efforts to reduce nuclear threats and that sanction state-sponsored terrorism. Furthermore, Bill 5324 protects state investments and Connecticut can feel secure knowing that their investment portfolios are safer by not funding business in Iran. On behalf of ADL, we urge you to act favorably on Bill 5324.