

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SJM 8030

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations & Elections, January 31, 2006

**Brief Description:** Calling on the President to provide a solution to the crisis in Sudan.

**Sponsors:** Senators Kline, Regala, Mulliken, Esser, Pflug, Swecker, Franklin, Rockefeller, Poulsen and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 1/31/06 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kastama, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Fairley, Kline, Mulliken and Pridemore.

**Staff:** Cindy Fazio (786-7405)

**Background:** In early 2003, a conflict broke out between the government forces of Sudan and rebel forces from the Darfur region of western Sudan. The militia forces backed by the government have launched ground and air attacks on innocent civilians and undefended villages in the region. The militia forces have also used rape, abduction of children, and the destruction of food and water resources as weapons of war. They have also denied humanitarian assistance to the affected people. Several international agencies and aid groups have reported the death and destruction as "catastrophic," and "the world's worst humanitarian catastrophe." Nearly three million people are now affected by the conflict. In December of 2005, the seventh Sudanese peace talks failed and the situation continues to worsen.

**Summary of Bill:** The Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Washington pray that the President of the United States uses all political and economic means necessary to bring about a peaceful solution to the crisis in Sudan. Actions recommended include: calling on the government of Sudan to grant full, unconditional, and immediate access to Darfur to humanitarian aid organization, human rights investigation teams of the United Nations and an international cease-fire monitoring team; encouraging the appropriate agencies to work with donors to develop a plan to deliver humanitarian assistance to Darfur; direct the Secretary of State to develop a plan for further bilateral and unilateral action in the event the government of Sudan fails to respond to the actions listed above; and direct the United States Representative to the United Nations to seek an official investigation by the United Nations to determine if crimes against humanity have been committed, work with the international community to ensure that individuals responsible for crimes against humanity are held accountable, and provide an effective system to ensure that witnesses and victims are protected during any fact finding process.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Testimony For:** I urge you to act to help end the genocide. There are churches on the ground there and they need our help in order to provide assistance. Sudan's policies are based on a theory that the world will stand by and watch the atrocities and do nothing. We must work to confront that attitude and stop it. The people need our aid and protection. These people's stories must be told. I have provide you with some information about how this affects the children. In 2004 the U.S. passed a resolution about genocide and citing the need to act. In 1994 in Rwanda, we said if we knew it was happening we would have stopped it. Now we know. Please act to help us stop the killing. This is the first genocide of the 21st century. The people who lived during the holocaust were asked why they didn't do more to stop it; we will be asked this by our children if we don't do something in Darfur. Our voices joined together can make a difference. Edmund Burke said, evil triumphs when good men do nothing. What do we owe these people? At the very least we owe them a voice. Do not tolerate genocide. Sudan will only stop the ethnic cleansing and genocide when voices are raised together against it. We must use our power to stop it.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Michael Ramos, Church Council of Greater Seattle; Diane Baer, Save Darfur Washington State; Rabbi Bruce Kadden, Temple Bethel, Tacoma, Washington; Brad Axel, Save Darfur Washington State.