

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

January 26, 1983

Dear Colleague:

I invite you to join me in sending a new quilt to Winne Mandela in South Africa. Let me explain why it is appropriate to take this unusual step.

Bannings, detentions, and police harassment are standard fare for Black political opponents of the South African government. But Winnie Mandela, wife of jailed Black nationalist leader Nelson Mandela, endured an exceptionally cruel and arbitrary act of harassment earlier this month.

Attached is an article by an eyewitness of that event, which transpired in the town of Brandfort, South Africa where Winnie Mandela has been confined under a South African banning order for over five years. The author of the article, Helen Suzman, is a member of Parliament long active on behalf of the disenfranchised Black majority in South Africa.

The Security police, according to Ms. Suzman, seized a number of Ms. Mandela's belongings during their unannounced visit. Among them was a bedspread, the colors of which the sharp-eyed police deemed to be subversive.

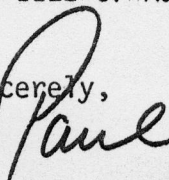
What we propose to do is send a new quilt to Winnie Mandela as a replacement for her abducted bedspread. It will be made available for signature by members of Congress who wish to express their sympathy and support for Ms. Mandela. The quilt is a symbol, of course, and hopefully a telling one of Congress' continuing concern over the systematic denial of basic civil rights to people of color in South Africa.

The quilt is adorned with a traditional American design, the "Lone Star", and was hand made in West Virginia. The African American Institute, Governor and Mrs. Jay Rockefeller, and the West Virginia Department of Culture and History have been generous in their support of this gesture.

The quilt will be displayed for public signing by members of Congress on Thursday, February 3, 1983, in Room S-116 in the Capitol, between 10 and 11 a.m. I hope to see you there.

Please call Chris Chamberlin at 4-1128 or Mary Helen Thompson at 4-8507 with your decision.

Sincerely,



PAUL E. TSONGAS
United States Senator

enclosure