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### **Rell signs Darfur bill**

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DANBURY -- Gov. M. Jodi Rell signed a bill Thursday at Danbury High School requiring the state to divest all pension money it has invested in companies that do business in Sudan. The move is intended to help force an end to the genocide in **Darfur**.

The signing, in the school's conference room beside the main office, was ceremonial, since the bill was enacted last May.

Rell's visit, however, was significant. She wanted to pay tribute to the six Danbury High students whose award-winning video about the **Darfur** tragedy encouraged the state to adopt the bill.

About a dozen people -- including Mayor Mark Boughton, state Rep. Jan Giegler, R-Danbury, Superintendent Salvatore Pascarella and assistant principal Tim Salem, who helped make the video -- were there to witness the signing.

And, as a result of the meeting, Rell agreed to send the video to other governors in the country who have not divested their state funds in Sudan.

"I'm getting choked up thinking of the work that went into making this," Rell said after watching "The Promise."

The video includes inspirational quotes, music, photographs of the Holocaust and of children in **Darfur**, and clips of high school students talking.

It also asks government officials to remember the promise made in 1946 to not allow the Holocaust to happen again.

Since the student filmmakers are now away at college, Danbury High seniors Sabrina Wirth, Max Delahanty and Alysha Rashid have assumed the role of promoting the message.

"After seeing how moving and powerful this video was, we couldn't let it die. It was a great feat for the students before us," 18-year-old Wirth said. "And, as the youth of our country, we have the power to effect change."

On Thursday the three seniors watched the video with Rell, who praised the students and their predecessors for finding a way to take action.

"It says, 'Enough already.' It speaks volumes to your commitment to get the word out," Rell said.

She described Public Act 06-51 as the state's way to take a stand against the violence in **Darfur**.

"This is such a small step we can take, to stand up and say we are going to take action, to get more people involved," she said.

Rell said the video reminded her of how often people don't take action when they can. She cited a quote in the video that said, "You can't escape responsibility for tomorrow by evading it today."

The students made a presentation last month in Michigan with Paul Rusesabagina, whose Hotel Rwanda housed refugees during the Hutu conflict in his country.

They have traveled around the state talking to students, sometimes with actress Mia Farrow, who is working for the cause. The students and Farrow will present the video before the U.S. Congress next month.

"I never imagined that a video our classmates made would get so much attention," 17-year-old Rashid said.

"I think it's incredible that Gov. Rell took time out of her schedule to focus on a social issue that Danbury students took an interest in," Wirth said.

"It shows we can trust our legislators to speak on our behalf."

On the Web: [www.dhsthepromise.com](http://www.dhsthepromise.com)

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