Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 8, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

With three nations in Africa currently facing an Ebola epidemic, our government must take aggressive action to combat and prevent the spread of this disease in the United States. We strongly urge the Administration to take immediate and decisive action to protect and prevent American citizens from further exposure to the deadly Ebola virus. The United States needs to institute travel restrictions, enhanced airport screening and possible quarantine of individuals who have traveled to, or from, the West African countries that have been most impacted by this tragic Ebola epidemic.

In Dallas, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently confirmed the first patient diagnosed with Ebola in the United States. Sadly, his death was announced this morning. An estimated 50 individuals who had contact with that individual in Dallas are being monitored for symptoms of Ebola, as well. In addition, a freelance NBC cameraman covering the outbreak in Monrovia, Liberia tested positive for Ebola and is being treated in Nebraska. He is the fifth confirmed American diagnosed with Ebola.

According to the CDC, individuals who have been exposed to Ebola likely will show signs of the disease within 21 days of exposure, but not necessarily before then. Hence not only are we at risk from travelers showing symptoms of the disease, but also asymptomatic travelers who harbor the disease and become symptomatic and contagious after arrival. We urge you to direct the CDC, in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security, to order our Customs and Border agents to begin more active screening of travelers to and from affected countries in West Africa, to prevent further exposure to Ebola in the United States.

Furthermore, these agencies should also consider a possible quarantine for any individual who has traveled to or from affected countries in West Africa within the dormancy period, aside from responsible health and military personnel sent there to fight the disease, to ensure that they have not contracted Ebola and are not contagious. Lastly, we ask the State Department to impose a travel ban and restrict travel visas issued to citizens of the West African countries experiencing this epidemic, until such countries have defeated the epidemic. Such a ban should be instituted by suspending earlier-issued visas until further notice, halting the issuance of such

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visas, and denying entry to the nationals of such counties upon presentation of a passport from those countries at our ports of entry. We note that Congressman Grayson made this request to your administration in July, and that 27 African countries already have taken such action to protect their own citizens, but the United States inexplicably has not.

You have suggested that you will not take such action until the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends it. We specifically call on you not to "pass the buck" on this crucial issue. The WHO is an organization of unelected bureaucrats and political appointees of foreign countries. It has no duty to protect the lives and well-being of Americans, as you do. Furthermore, it has utterly failed to stem this epidemic through its own action. The responsibility for this decision is yours, not theirs.

Please note that we support all efforts to provide humanitarian relief to the stricken countries in question, and that the measures that we propose should not be misconstrued as a substitute for such relief. Additionally, such measures are meant to protect Americans from citizens of the affected countries who, wittingly or unwittingly, harbor the disease, and these measures are not meant to constrain American citizens in any manner not already in effect under our health laws. Finally, we do not intend that such measures impede trade with any of the countries in question, nor that they last for any period beyond the current crisis.

Because of its extraordinary and unprecedented death rate, the current Ebola outbreak is, by far, one of the most challenging global health epidemics that the world has faced in decades. It is of the utmost importance that your Administration take these commonsense steps to protect U.S. citizens from this Ebola epidemic.

Sincerely,

Steve Stivers
Member of Congress

Alan Grayson
Member of Congress

Ted Yoho
Member of Congress

Robert Pittenger
Member of Congress

Dennis Ross
Member of Congress

Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress

Kenny Marchant
Member of Congress

Stephen Fincher
Member of Congress

Tom Cole
Member of Congress

Michael Grimm
Member of Congress

Steve Stockman
Member of Congress

Adrian Smith
Member of Congress

Bill Posey
Member of Congress

Dave Joyce
Member of Congress

Tom Marino
Member of Congress

Mike Kelly
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Roger Williams
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Steve Daines
Member of Congress

Matt Salmon
Member of Congress

Gregg Harper
Member of Congress

Andy Barr
Member of Congress

Steven Palazzo
Member of Congress

Mike Coffman
Member of Congress

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress

Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress

Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress

Kevin Yoder
Member of Congress

CC: Secretary John Kerry. U.S. Department of State
Secretary Jeh Johnson, U.S. Department of Homeland Secretary
Director Tom Frieden, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention