



One Hundred Thirteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

October 15, 2014

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Nebraska Avenue Center
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretaries Johnson and Kerry:

We write today concerning the urgent need to contain the Ebola Virus. While we understand significant efforts are underway to screen travelers at the point of exit leaving West Africa, as well as recently established procedures established at five ports of entry in the United States, we believe additional steps should be considered to curtail the potential spread of Ebola to the United States.

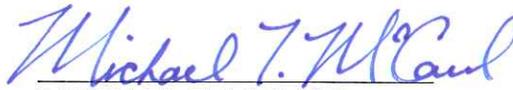
Last week, the Committee on Homeland Security held a field hearing in Dallas, Texas, where we received testimony from Federal, State and local officials on the government's current response to the recent Ebola cases in Texas. While we remain confident in CBP's ability to adequately screen individuals with overt signs of disease, given the virus's long incubation period of up to 21 days, individuals carrying the virus may not show symptoms when they leave West Africa or upon entry in the United States. As was the case with Thomas Eric Duncan, the first Ebola case in Dallas, symptoms manifested days after he arrived.

Despite the strong public health system in the United States to combat a spread of Ebola, the most recent cases involving the two Dallas health care workers demonstrates the vulnerabilities of our system and steep learning curve public health officials are facing. In light of these current vulnerabilities, we urge you to consider temporarily suspending visas of individuals from Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone until the outbreak is under control. Such a measure would ensure healthcare workers and supplies are able to be transported to impacted areas of West Africa, while also ensuring the public health and safety of the American public.

Taking such action to temporarily suspend some of the 13,500 visas would improve the American public's confidence of public health officials to limit the spread of Ebola to the United States, while simultaneously permitting a robust effort by the U.S. Government and global health agencies to combat this vicious disease in West Africa. Moreover, we believe that any individuals that are diagnosed with Ebola should go to one of the four hospitals (Emory University Hospital, National Institutes of Health, Nebraska Medical Center, St. Patrick Hospital in Montana) that specialize in the treatment of this disease.

We urge your consideration of these necessary steps to prohibit the spread of this deadly virus. We thank you for your attention to this grave matter and wish you the best of luck as our nation faces this public health crisis.

Sincerely,



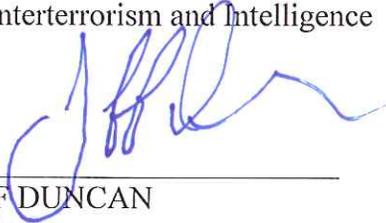
MICHAEL T. McCAUL
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security



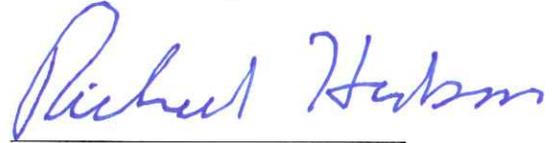
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