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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

October 16, 2014

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
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AVIATION
RAILROADS, PIPELINES AND
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

The present and growing threat of Ebola is one that, if left unchecked, could inflict lasting and severe harm on not only the United States but upon all nations. More must be done and be done quickly to address this crisis both domestically and internationally, and I urge you to call the U.S. House of Representatives back to Washington for an emergency session to address this issue.

The events of the past few weeks demonstrate that more must be done to address this outbreak and that we are losing the battle against this devastating virus. Scientists are reporting its exponential growth in West Africa. If we are encountering the current domestic containment and prevention issues with a few thousand infected abroad, we can reasonably expect even more prevention and containment issues with ten or twenty times the cases in West Africa.

We cannot, we must not, sit idly and allow this to happen unabated. Taking only an aggressive, defensive posture and addressing primarily the homeland will not ultimately be successful. We must engage and dispatch the full resources of the United States to contain and eradicate this outbreak at its source. We must do more domestically, but if we are to ultimately be successful in our fight against Ebola we must dramatically increase the resources and assistance going to West Africa. While the United States is a global leader in this battle already, we must do more.

Private citizens and foundations can and should play a part in helping to provide resources to address this crisis, but this is an emergency that will ultimately be resolved or exacerbated by government institutions. Our government must take all steps to address it and time is of the essence. The infection multiplier tells us this is not a time or situation for bureaucratic bungling, but for swift, aggressive action. The United States has done it before; we can and must do it again now.

Congress needs to act immediately on a bill to ban commercial travel and restrict entry to or from the affected areas and the United States. But we should also authorize and fund increased military or government-provided transportation to ensure workers, equipment and resources can reach the afflicted nations and regions while the commercial travel ban is in place. We must also increase the amount of aid going to West Africa so we can avoid a legacy where Ebola lingers for years and becomes a new normal in our world. We have a window to avoid this fate but it is limited and closing quickly. We must act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Reid Ribble".

Reid J. Ribble
Member of Congress