Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 16, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

On October 8, we learned that one of the health care workers who cared for the first patient to be diagnosed with Ebola in the United States has contracted Ebola from that patient. Nina Pham's diagnosis is alarming news.

Prior to her diagnosis with Ebola, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Dr. Tom Frieden had said that contract tracing and infection control is basic public health and what "we" do best. Dr. Frieden had also said that any hospital in the United States was equipped and capable of handling patients with Ebola.

Unfortunately, that analysis has proven to be inaccurate. Tuesday, October 14, Dr. Frieden said that we "can't rule out that other people who cared for the index patient had exposure." In addition, he said that he wished we had put a robust infection control team on the ground in Texas "the day the first case was diagnosed." And on October 15, the CDC confirmed that a second health care worker who cared for Thomas Duncan at Texas Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas has tested positive for Ebola.

Second guessing will not protect Texans and other Americans who are worried about the spread of Ebola in the United States. Section 212(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act gives you the authority to deny entry into the United States of any class of aliens whose entry "would be detrimental to the interests of the United States." **We strongly urge you to use that authority to put in place a travel ban for individuals traveling from Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia**. As you know, these countries have been struggling to contain the Ebola outbreak. According to the World Health Organization, the current Ebola outbreak in West Africa is the largest and deadliest in recorded history and has killed more than 4,000 people. It is time to take proactive precautions to prevent additional Ebola cases from arriving on our shores.

Northeastern University Professor Alessandro Vespignani has developed a computer model that calculates the risk of Ebola being spread through air travel. According to his analysis, the United States is one of the top 16 countries at risk of Ebola from passengers arriving on commercial air flights. Professor Vespignani's analysis went on to conclude that if we restrict air travel we reduce that risk by at least 50 percent.

We've already seen that passenger screening won't protect Americans from travelers coming to this country who have been exposed to Ebola in West Africa. It is well documented that Thomas Duncan lied about his potential exposure to Ebola to officials in Liberia before he boarded a flight to Brussels. In fact, before his death Liberian officials had announced that they planned to prosecute him for lying during their passenger screening process. Screening arriving air travelers in the United States will not

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protect us from other individuals who have been exposed to Ebola and are asymptomatic when they first arrive, but later develop symptoms and spread Ebola in our communities and hospitals.

Implementing travel restrictions is the most effective way to prevent the continued spread of Ebola in this country. We strongly urge you to immediately use your authority to implement a travel ban and protect Americans from this deadly disease. We appreciate your prompt attention to this urgent matter, and look forward to hearing your reply.

Sincerely,

John Culberson

Kevin Brady

John R. Carter

Pete Olson

Randy K. Weber

Blake Farenthold

Roger Williams

Lamar Smith

Joe Barton

cc: Secretary of State John Kerry
Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson
CDC Director Thomas Frieden