

Expressing the sense of Congress that health workers deserve our profound gratitude and respect for their commitments and sacrifices in addressing the Ebola epidemic in West Africa

Whereas the current Ebola epidemic in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone is the first Ebola outbreak in West Africa and by far the largest Ebola outbreak ever;

Whereas the Ebola Virus Disease is a severe acute viral illness that has symptoms that are also common to other viruses, such as fever, muscle pain, and intestinal problems, making it difficult to properly identify;

Whereas Ebola outbreaks are characterized by human-to-human transmission of the virus through direct contact with blood, body fluids, and tissues of infected people such as through needle sticks, unprotected care of infected individuals, and unsafe funeral preparation or burial ceremonies;

Whereas Ebola outbreaks historically have a case fatality rate of up to 90 percent;

Whereas there is currently no licensed vaccine or treatment for Ebola other than supportive care;

Whereas according to the World Health Organization, as of November 12, 2014, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have reported 14,098 suspected, probable, and confirmed cases since December 2013;

Whereas the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that for every case reported, an additional 1.5 cases are not recorded;

Whereas second order impacts of the Ebola outbreak are threatening local public health systems, economic and food security, and political stability;

Whereas the Ebola virus threatens to destabilize the nascent political systems in affected countries and disrupt the free flow of people and goods in a globalized world economy;

Whereas the United States cannot truly protect itself from the Ebola crisis without ending the outbreak in West Africa;

Whereas the United States has addressed the crisis by disbursing over \$414 million to date, deploying a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to coordinate the U.S. government response in West Africa, sending U.S. military and broader uniformed services to support logistics, training, and engineering;

Whereas the Continuing Appropriations Resolution for Fiscal Year 2015 included \$88 million to support the international response to the outbreak and to invest in the research and development of Ebola vaccines and treatments;

Whereas at the time of the initial outbreak, many health workers in West Africa did not have proper training or experience to recognize, diagnose, and care for Ebola patients and prevent transmission;

Whereas the United States is helping to train health workers from member states of the African Union to directly respond to medical needs in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, but more trained workers are still needed;

Whereas non-governmental organizations such as Doctors Without Borders (MSF), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, American Jewish World Service, International Medical Corps, International Rescue Committee, Partners in Health, Samaritan's Purse, Global Communities, , and many more are responding to the crisis;

Whereas the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Center for International Disaster Information operate a database for medical professionals in the United States who are willing to go overseas to fight Ebola;

Whereas as of November 10, 2014, USAID has received nearly 4,800 self-nominated, non-vetted volunteers through the usaid.gov online registration portal for healthcare volunteers and is passing these contacts to interested aid organizations working in the region for vetting, possible selection, and training;

Whereas MSF has said what is needed most to fight the epidemic in West Africa is not cash contributions, but rather additional health workers;

Whereas according to the World Health Organization, over 540 health workers in West Africa, including several Americans, have been infected in the current outbreak and over 310 have died;

Whereas two nurses contracted Ebola while treating a patient in the United States, and have since recovered;

Whereas the U.S. Government, in cooperation with international partners, must do everything possible to protect health workers who may come in contact with Ebola, such as by procuring additional units of personal protective equipment (PPE) and investing in research and development of better methods of protection;

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That Congress--

- (1) Recognizes and honors the commitment, courage and sacrifices made by medical professionals, national and community health care workers, government officials, military personnel, nongovernmental organizations, members of civil society, faith leaders, and volunteers engaged in the effort to combat and contain the Ebola Virus Disease, thereby saving countless lives;
- (2) Calls on research and development groups and medical device companies to develop better ways to protect health workers from Ebola infection;

- (3) Remains committed to mobilizing the resources and personnel necessary to help fight the spread of this disease to save lives and to protect the national security and global health interests of the United States;
- (4) Calls on the international community to increase its commitments of resources, services, and personnel to assist affected nations in addressing the current epidemic; and
- (5) Recognizes the need to address long-term solutions to the Ebola epidemic, including by helping to build resilient public health systems.