November 12, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski and Ranking Member Shelby:

Upon reviewing President Obama’s emergency appropriations request to address the Ebola outbreak, I wanted to bring two concerns to your attention.

First, I am concerned that the request does not seem to include a clear vision for training health care workers to care for Ebola patients and address related issues. Health care facilities across the country have been turning to the leading experts in the field for guidance as they care for or prepare to care for a potential Ebola patient. The federal government has been turning to these experts as well. I believe emergency Ebola spending should fund a training program that recognizes and continues to utilize those experts who have already invested significant time sharing expertise and developed extensive training materials with and for their federal partners. Appropriate funding dedicated to national training would enhance the ability of these experts to provide robust resources and to continue to lead education and training efforts. This would ensure the continued availability of high quality training as our nation seeks to improve Ebola preparedness.

Additionally, the request does not make clear if compensation would be provided to health care facilities for care and procedures given to Ebola patients in the United States at the direction of federal authorities. This care can cost more than $30,000 per day per patient and funding should be available for uncompensated care for the patients that have already received care and for those who may receive care in the future.

I believe it is important to build our future capacity to care for patients with Ebola and other infectious disease, and establishing funding for training and providing funds for patient care would contribute to that effort. As the Appropriations Committee finalizes supplemental appropriations legislation, please consider designating funds for training and patient care. I appreciate your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Mike Johanns
United States Senator