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October 16, 2014

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

The Honorable Gil Kerlikowske
Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Secretary Johnson and Commissioner Kerlikowske:

It is with a great sense of urgency I write to you regarding apparent on-going vulnerabilities at JFK International Airport exposing Customs and Border Protection Officers (CBPOs), as well as the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) Police, New York City first responders, and the traveling public to Ebola. It is vital that more be done to provide training to these individuals and implement protocols should an infected passenger transit the airport.

It has come to my attention that there are between 70-100 individuals per day arriving at JFK from countries impacted by the Ebola outbreak, over 2/3 of the total number of passengers of concern entering the United States daily. These individuals transit the airport with the rest of the traveling population, including using the restrooms. It is only after they arrive at the CBP primary screening location that they are separated and sent to secondary inspection for a medical check and to complete the questionnaire. Given the high volume of travelers at JFK, it is essential that extraordinary measures are taken to intercept possible Ebola-infected passengers while keeping the public, CBPOs and other first responders safe from exposure.

It is my understanding that a plane from Nigeria landed at JFK today with a passenger who passed away en route. Based on what I know of this situation, I have very serious concerns about the cursory exam conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) official to determine the passenger did not have Ebola, as well as the lack of instructions provided to CBP and PANYNJ Police regarding handling the remains and the remainder of the passengers.

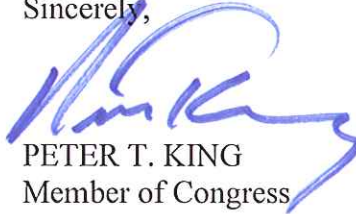
Given the seriousness of this issue, I am requesting an immediate response to the following questions:

- What protocols are in place should an infected passenger exhibit symptoms while in the airport or while in flight?

- Has the Department reviewed options for establishing isolation zones within a terminal to screen and interview high-risk passengers?
- What training and equipment is provided to CBPOs at JFK who may come into contact with a high-risk passenger at primary or secondary inspection?
- What cleaning and sanitizing procedures are in place for primary and secondary inspection areas?

Please provide a response no later than Friday, October 17, 2014. Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



PETER T. KING
Member of Congress