

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 21, 2014

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hagel:

We write to urge you to increase hardship compensation for military personnel deployed to fight Ebola in West Africa. The military's efforts to slow the spread of Ebola in Operation United Assistance will save thousands of lives. Our men and women in uniform are making sacrifices every day in West Africa for the greater good and must be recognized. The conditions on the ground are difficult and our military personnel deserve more than an additional \$5.00 a day in hardship pay.¹

The Ebola epidemic is a global public health and humanitarian crisis that has devastated Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. As of last week the total number of estimated cases increased to more than 13,000 and the virus has claimed over 5,000 lives. The U.S. military is currently performing an invaluable service by building the infrastructure and providing the supplies needed to help stop the spread of Ebola. Operation United Assistance is an example of how our brave men and women in uniform put themselves at risk to protect our country and prevent humanitarian crises across the globe. Hardship duty pay should reflect the sacrifice that our forces make.

The arduous conditions in all of the West African countries where our military has been deployed to fight Ebola qualify for hardship pay. Liberia was removed from the list of places where U.S. service members qualify for imminent danger pay in January. As the country struggles to recover from 14 years of civil war, electricity, water, health care and other critical infrastructure are lacking. Providing training and equipment in Ebola hot zones and building infrastructure in remote areas during the rainy season carry manageable but high-stakes risks. Moreover, the necessary personal protective equipment make work so difficult that health care workers and lab technicians can only work for short periods of time before risking heat stroke and dehydration.

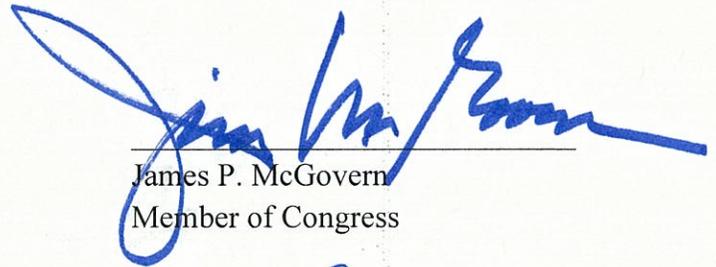
¹ Achenbach, Joel, and Lena Sun. "U.S. Ebola Fighters Head to Africa, but Will the Military and Civilian Effort Be Enough?" *Washington Post*. The Washington Post. Web. 25 Oct. 2014.

Title 37, section 305 of the U.S. Code gives discretion to the Secretary of Defense to increase hardship duty pay up to \$1,500 per month. We respectfully request that you consider increasing the amount of hardship pay provided to the brave men and women serving in West Africa.

Sincerely,



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



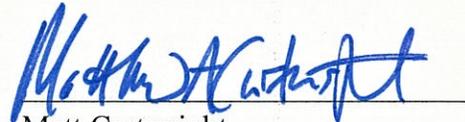
Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress



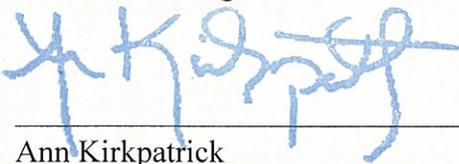
Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Alan S. Lowenthal
Member of Congress



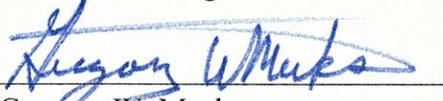
Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress



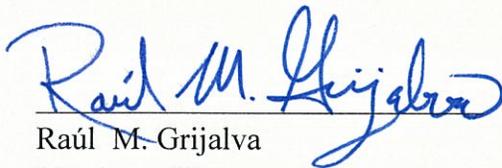
Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



David Loebsock
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress