



One Hundred Fifteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

May 5, 2017

The Honorable Thomas E. Price, M.D.
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Price:

As Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, we are writing to express our concern that Taiwan may not be granted observer status at the upcoming World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva from May 22-31. We urge you to meet with the delegation that Taiwan will send to Geneva regardless of whether or not they will be permitted to participate in WHA proceedings.

Taiwan first sought observer status at the WHA in 1997. With strong support from successive U.S. Administrations, Congress, and like-minded World Health Organization Member States, Taiwan was invited by the World Health Organization in 2009 as an observer under the name "Chinese Taipei." Taiwan has participated in every WHA meeting since that time.

Under Taiwan's new President Tsai Ing-wen, Taiwan faces increased pressure from Beijing to curb Taiwan's engagement in the international community. Last year, Taiwan's invitation to the 2016 WHA arrived late, and for the first time included troubling language conditioning Taiwan's participation on the "one China principle." This year, indications are that Taiwan, in a break with eight years of tradition, will not be invited to participate at all due to pressure from Beijing.

Taiwan remains a model contributor to world health, having provided financial and technical assistance in the face of numerous global health challenges. Taiwan has invested over \$6 billion in international medical and humanitarian aid efforts impacting over 80 countries since 1996. In 2014, Taiwan responded to the Ebola crisis by donating \$1 million and providing 100,000 sets of personal protective equipment. Through the Global Cooperation and Training Framework, the United States and Taiwan have jointly conducted training programs for experts to combat MERS, Dengue Fever, and Zika.

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As we know from diseases like Ebola, Zika and the avian flus, infectious disease knows no borders and spreads quickly. The global health community does not benefit when Taiwan is kept in the dark on these critical matters: we are all safer when Taiwan has meaningful and unobstructed participation in international health cooperation forums. In addition to the benefits accrued by the international community from Taiwan's participation, we should all agree that the health and safety of the people of Taiwan should not be needlessly held hostage by politics.

We urge you to encourage Members to maintain their support for Taiwan's continued participation at the WHA. We also believe a visit from you to Taipei later this year would signal strong support for Taiwan's global health efforts around the world.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



EDWARD R. ROYCE
Chairman



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Rex Tillerson, Secretary of State
The Honorable Nikki Haley, Permanent Representative to the United Nations