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House of Representatives

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May 5, 2017

The Honorable Tom Price
Secretary of Health and Human Services
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to request your assistance in securing Taiwan's participation at the World Health Assembly (WHA) summit to be held in Geneva from May 22 to May 31.

Taiwan's exclusion from the World Health Organization (WHO) threatens the international community's full access to Taiwan's high quality health care information. Due to its superb talent, data collection, and quarantine and treatment facilities, Taiwan has excellent infectious disease control capabilities. Its valuable information and cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) was crucial in stemming the spread of SARS 14 years ago. In February, the CDC confirmed Taiwan's first human fatality from the H7N9 avian flu virus after earlier positive tests for a highly pathogenic avian flu virus strain. Taiwan's cooperation with the WHO is crucial to helping global health services effectively battle these and other diseases.

As was the case with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) last year, it is likely that Taiwan will be blocked from receiving an invitation to the WHA summit. In a dangerous and shortsighted effort to constrain Taiwan, China hinders Taiwan's participation in many international organizations, including ICAO, WHO, and INTERPOL. Taiwan's meaningful participation in WHO is not only in the interest of Taiwan but is of critical importance to our own health care system and capability of fighting infectious diseases. I respectfully request your assistance in ensuring that Taiwan receives an invitation from WHO to join this month's WHA and encourage you to visit Taiwan in the near future to discuss opportunities to collaborate, to our mutual benefit, on public health protection measures.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Member of Congress