

EMERGENCY SPENDING FOR AN EMERGING DEBT CRISIS

QUICK STATS

- ✘ **CONFERENCE:** Spending
- ✘ **TEAM:** Departments of State and Health and Human Services
- **FUMBLE:** \$2+ billion for 28 patients
- **HOW TO RECOVER THE BALL:** Return excess emergency spending

In 2014, a massive Ebola epidemic spread across west Africa. It took weeks for the U.S. government to develop a plan, but eventually the Administration allotted \$5.4 billion in emergency spending for Ebola containment and treatment. American troops and foreign aid were sent to construct 11 treatment centers in west Africa.

After conducting an in-depth investigation, the *New York Times*, published a blistering article in April 2015 that detailed the failure of America's response to Ebola.²³⁶ Their findings showed that after spending hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars and deploying thousands of troops to west Africa to combat Ebola, only 28 Ebola patients were treated at the 11 treatment centers built by the United States.²³⁷ That is equivalent to around \$72 million per patient. A *Washington Post* investigation in January 2015 reported that some of these treatment centers had not treated a single patient.²³⁸

Ultimately \$1.4 billion in State's emergency funds for Ebola remained unobligated as of August 2015.²³⁹ HHS had a whopping \$1.49 billion on top of that as of September 2015.²⁴⁰ Considering the World Health Organization's most recent Ebola situation report announced a grand total of four people in the world contracted Ebola, where is this money going?²⁴¹

RECOVERY

Rather than aimless and reactionary, American foreign aid needs to be strategic and solutions-oriented. While there is some irony in telling Congress to not move too quickly, the knee-jerk response to every crisis causes overreaction. Since the crisis itself has diminished, the money should be returned to the U.S. Treasury since it is no longer needed for its intended purpose. Ebola emergency funds were all borrowed funds. Americans should always be there to help those in need, but the federal government should not waste money.

[For more information, please visit:](#)

[The New York Times: Ebola Clinics in Liberia are Seen as Misstep in US Relief Effort](#)

[The Washington Post: U.S.-built Ebola treatment centers in Liberia are nearly empty as outbreak fades](#)