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Congress of the United States
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August 5, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Reid,

The threat of Zika to our national way of life can no longer accommodate the calendar of the United States Senate. With the State of Florida's recent announcement that 15 individuals have contracted the dangerous Zika virus through local transmission, Florida now has become the first state in the nation to report non-travel related cases of the virus. On Monday, August 1, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced a travel warning for Wynwood, a neighborhood located in Miami, FL where most of these cases have been identified.

Zika virus is a dangerous disease linked to birth defects, certain neurological disorders, and Guillain-Barré syndrome. The disease is most commonly transmitted through a bite from the *Aedes* species of mosquito, but can also be spread through sexual transmission. Prior to Florida's announcement, the CDC had reported 4,729 locally acquired cases in U.S. territories, with the majority being recorded in Puerto Rico.

Despite the acknowledged threat to the United States, the House and Senate have thus far been unable to agree on meaningful prevention, containment, and treatment measures. Further disagreement and inaction is unacceptable, and we implore the Senate to explore all options to make urgently-needed funding available immediately.

The House has referred multiple Zika-related measures to the Senate for final passage. In May, the House passed H.R. 5243, the Zika Response Appropriations Act. Passage of this bill is the quickest way for the Senate to get a clean bill to the President that responds to the threat posed by Zika. It would appropriate over \$600 million in funding to combat the spread of the virus through the remainder of this fiscal year, allowing Congress additional time to pass long-term,

comprehensive legislation during the appropriations negotiations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017. Additionally, the Senate could agree to the conference report to H.R. 2577, which includes language that would direct \$1.1 billion through FY2017 to fight the spread of Zika.

Regardless of which bill receives final passage, it is unacceptable to wait until after the August recess to act. We again urge the Senate to aggressively pursue any options that would start the flow of needed resources to the front line to secure the nation from this biological threat.

Sincerely,



Curt Clawson
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress