



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

BILL NELSON
FLORIDA

July 7, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell,

I urge you to bring the bipartisan \$1.1 billion bill the Senate already passed to fight the Zika virus back to the Senate Floor as a standalone bill.

For over four months, Congress has debated the need for supplemental funding to address this health crisis in a timely and comprehensive manner. In May 2016, both sides of the aisle came together on the Senate Floor to pass legislation to provide emergency funding to help prepare for and curb the spread of the Zika virus.

The partisan Conference report for H.R. 2577 that the Senate voted on last week was not a serious solution. I strongly urge you to advance a bipartisan bill that provides emergency funding, and is free of misguided policy riders.

Time is of the essence.

Just over two weeks ago, Dr. Tony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases housed within the National Institutes of Health (NIH), stated that the Zika “vaccine effort will be blunted” without additional funding. The NIH has already been forced to tap into funding intended for malaria and tuberculosis research to fund Zika vaccine research.

Funding our nation’s Zika response is something that simply cannot wait any longer and it cannot be used as a vehicle to advance partisan, ideological positions. Surely, this is something that members of both parties can agree to.

Sincerely,

Bill Nelson