



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

BILL NELSON
FLORIDA

July 14, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20501

Dear Leader McConnell,

The conference committee's report for H.R. 2577 has once again failed to garner the support needed to gain approval in the Senate. That's because, as you know, attached to this bill are several highly-partisan provisions that make the entire measure unpassable in its current form – regardless of how many times the Senate is forced to vote on it.

At some point, we have to move on. The number of reported Zika cases is quickly on the rise here in the U.S. It is imperative that we – as a Congress – reach some sort of compromise before adjourning for the upcoming seven-week recess.

Compromising is precisely what we did back in May, when 68 senators voted in support of the Blunt-Murray amendment to provide \$1.1 billion in emergency funding to fight the spread of the virus.

Sadly, despite the overwhelming support that measure won in the Senate, the bill was hijacked by some in the House of Representatives who attached to it a number of highly-partisan provisions before passing it in the middle of the night, with no opportunity for debate.

Now, instead of sending a clear message back to the House that such hyper-partisan behavior will not be tolerated while the health of the American people is at risk, we here in the Senate are being forced to vote on this ridiculous bill over and over again.

This political gamesmanship has to end.

I strongly urge you to exercise your power as the leader of the Senate to bring up a Zika-funding measure that has an actual chance of passage. I have suggested bringing back the \$1.1 billion compromise bill that 68 of our colleagues approved in May, but if there is some other measure that you think at least 60 of our colleagues will support, then I urge you to bring that up as well.

The bottom line is: we must do something. We cannot afford to put this issue off for another seven weeks while Congress is on break. So, as we continue to work toward a solution, I strongly urge you to delay the upcoming recess until both chambers agree on an emergency spending bill and get it to the president's desk.

Sincerely,

Bill Nelson