

BRADLEY BYRNE
1ST DISTRICT, ALABAMA

SERVING BALDWIN, CLARKE,
ESCAMBIA, MOBILE, MONROE AND
WASHINGTON COUNTIES

HOUSE COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
RULES

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

August 3, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As the representative of a district threatened by the Zika virus, I am writing to express my great concern at your Administration's allocation of resources to combat Zika. Since February, you have urged Congress to appropriate \$1.9 billion to combat Zika. Congressional Republicans joined your call for an immediate response to this crisis; however, at a time when this country is \$19 trillion in debt, my colleagues and I have simply asked that any funding be targeted and offset from other spending. To that end, House Republicans requested the large amount of money left over from the Ebola threat be used to address the Zika virus.

I was pleased your Administration announced on April 6, 2016 that \$589 million, the majority of which was unspent Ebola funding, would be redirected to combat the Zika virus. However, as of last Friday, the Office of Management and Budget confirmed that of this \$589 million, \$385 million is unspent. Astonishingly, as your demand for \$1.9 billion continues, 65% of the funds already available to the Administration for Zika have not been used.

Now, in the nearly four months since April 6, the Zika threat is upon us. Zika has reached Florida and may spread into Alabama soon. For the first time in history, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued a travel warning inside the continental United States for pregnant women. Moreover, in Puerto Rico, positive tests of the virus have jumped from 14% in February to 64% in June, and 2% of the island's blood supply has tested positive for the Zika virus.

I agree that additional funding is necessary, which is why the House passed a \$1.1 billion bill on a bipartisan basis to fund Zika prevention, treatment, and research. Despite the fact our bill includes the same level of funding that previously received overwhelming support in the Senate, our bill has fallen victim to a filibuster by Senate Democrats. It seems that some people are more interested in using the Zika virus as a tool to score political points on the campaign trail instead of actually working to address the serious issue.

The threat of Zika is too important to the people of Alabama and other southern states for the current situation to continue. I urge you to take immediate action to ensure the available funding resources are swiftly and properly allocated by federal agencies to combat the Zika threat.

Sincerely,



Bradley Byrne
MEMBER OF CONGRESS