

Senator from Florida, there are other issues. One, they ask for a government-wide contingency fund that Health and Human Services controls and can transfer funds elsewhere. So what they want to do is play a shell game with this money. They want to get the money, and if they do not need it to deal with Zika, they can transfer it for other purposes—again, without any transparency or any real political accountability.

I think responsible Members of the Senate—and I would expect all 100 of us would put ourselves in that category—would want to know where the transparency is, where the accountability is, where the plan is, so we can sit down and do this as mature adults in a non-partisan way in order to solve the problem.

Here is another thing that sort of jumps out at me: When I look at the President's request for \$1.9 billion, they actually talk about funding matters unrelated to Zika. They talk about funding things at the Environmental Protection Agency. And looking at the request to transfer funds government-wide, basically they are requesting money, it appears—unless there is some logical explanation as to why we should, which they have not yet made—on an emergency basis, to grant funds to the Environmental Protection Agency. That is a little hard to understand.

Finally, there is this: All of us are willing to deal with this in a responsible, nonpartisan way. That is the reason I have spent time at the Galveston National Laboratory and the Texas Medical Center trying to learn as much as I can about this, so I can do my job, just as I am sure every individual Senator wants to do their job in a responsible way. But to come in and ask for \$1.9 billion in emergency funding, which means it is not paid for—it is borrowed money, which adds to the deficit and the debt—is a pretty serious matter, especially when our national debt is \$19 trillion and has almost doubled under the Obama administration.

This is a very serious matter, and I treat it seriously, and I trust all 100 Senators believe this is something we ought to deal with responsibly and in a deliberate sort of way, and we will. But it is not by coming to the floor and grandstanding by asking for \$1.9 billion blank checks without any plan to spend it in an appropriate sort of way.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Washington.

ZIKA VIRUS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, there are already nearly 900 cases of the Zika virus in the United States and its 3 territories, including actually 2 confirmed cases in my home State of Washington. A recent survey showed that 40 percent of adults in our country see this virus as a reason to delay starting families. Those are disturbing statistics. They make it clear that the Zika virus is a public health emergency, and there is no good reason for the delay we are seeing from our Republican colleagues in addressing this.

Months ago, the administration put forward the strong proposal that Senator REID introduced today. Republicans refused at the time to even consider it, and I am disappointed again this morning that they weighed in on the side of further delay rather than acting on this. As a result, we are getting closer to the summer and to mosquito season, but we still here in this body have not moved on emergency supplemental funding that would put much needed resources into preventing and treating this frightening virus.

Too many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle still don't seem to see Zika as an emergency. Some Republicans are insisting we shouldn't give the administration a penny in additional funding to support the response we need to make. Others are saying that action on Zika can wait—wait for weeks or months. Republicans in Congress might be able to simply wait, but families across this country cannot.

Addressing this Zika virus shouldn't be controversial. With women's and children's health and well-being on the line, it certainly should not be a place for partisanship.

Democrats are at the table. We want to get this done as soon as possible. In fact, as recently as a few days ago I was hopeful Republicans were truly interested in working with us to get this done and to be able to find an actual path forward. We had some good conversations last week. But I am worried that in the last few days it has become clear once again that the extreme right, like the Heritage Foundation, is in control, and Republican leaders have been unable to demonstrate to this point a path on how we can get a bipartisan deal signed into law. This issue is far too important to have Republican infighting hold it up. So I urge my Republican colleagues to join us. We are ready to be at the table to work with them. We need to address this as an emergency.

Then I hope we can move on to work on the other really critical issues before us: the opioid epidemic that so many have been here to talk about; the families in Flint who are suffering; ensuring our Supreme Court nominee gets a fair consideration—a hearing, even. There is so much work to be done.

I am here to urge our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to recognize this is an emergency. It cannot wait. Families are waiting for us to act. We need to get the research. We need to have an understanding of what this disease is. We certainly need to put into place prevention, and we certainly need to work on the important path forward in making sure we have the right kinds of education out there as well as a solution to this problem that is rapidly becoming an American problem.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, if this isn't an emergency, then I don't know what is. Zika is a public health emergency. It defines a public health emergency, and we really have to act now to fund the administration's full \$1.9 billion supplemental funding request.

I want to respond to the assistant majority leader's concerns that there is no plan. With due respect—and I know he is working hard on this as well—that is just not accurate. The legislation propounded by Senators NELSON and others has a very specific plan. I was fortunate enough to visit the headquarters for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. They have a very specific plan. It is vector controlled. It is developing the diagnostic tests necessary to figure out whether or not people are carriers of the Zika virus. It is working on a vaccine. They have a high degree of confidence that they are eventually going to get a vaccine. But this takes time, and this takes resources. It is public health outreach regarding mosquitos and how this is transmitted, and it is assurance regarding the safety of our blood supply. So they have a plan.

Let me be a little more specific: \$743 million for CDC—this money would include grants and technical assistance to Puerto Rico and the U.S. territories and help our domestic and international response activities; about \$250 million for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, or CMS, to increase the Federal match rate to Puerto Rico where there have been 500 active transmission cases—and, unfortunately, that number continues to go up; several hundred million dollars for the National Institutes of Health and BARDA to invest in vaccine research and development. That is the end game, but in the meantime, we have to prevent the transmission as our country warms up and as the mosquitos become more prevalent across the country with \$10 million to the FDA for a vaccine and diagnostics development review and \$335 million to USAID's efforts abroad to support affected countries' public health efforts on mosquito-borne diseases.

I will make a couple of specific procedural points. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I believe it is really important that we are trying to move in the regular order on each individual Appropriations subcommittee.