

faced the Ebola crisis, we responded. When the avian flu crisis hit, we responded quickly with emergency funding. We have done the same with tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and fires, but the Republicans aren't doing that. I don't know; I don't understand this. It is an emergency. Zika is an emergency. It is devastating. Republicans should treat it as such and work with Democrats to fully respond to this. They should do it now; they should have done it months ago.

It is stunning and sad that instead of responding responsibly to this Nation's emergency in a bipartisan way, the Republicans have retreated behind closed doors and are negotiating Zika funding among themselves. There is a conference going on, but nothing is happening. The Republicans over in the House are playing around with something they are going to send us. We know; we have been there. It is going to come here. The Republicans in the House will then decide to go home, and the Democrats will have to go with them, and they will be gone. So we will be jammed sometime next week, and the Republican leader will say: Listen, we have to do this. The House is gone. We can't change anything. Well, that is wrong. They should not turn this general public health emergency into a partisan game, syphoning money from Ebola or cutting the Affordable Care Act as we heard they are doing over in the House. That is a dangerous break from our commitment to address emergencies we are funding.

We should respond to this crisis and respond now. We know what we need to send the President—at least \$1.9 billion—and it is an emergency. It is no different, as I have said, than a flood or a fire or those other emergencies I mentioned. For every moment the Republicans delay in responding to the Zika virus, we endanger more Americans.

Mr. President, there are a number of people on the floor. I would ask the Chair to announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2578, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2578) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Shelby/Mikulski amendment No. 4685, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell (for McCain) amendment No. 4787 (to amendment No. 4685), to amend section 2709 of title 18, United States Code, to clarify that the Government may obtain a specified set of electronic communication transactional records under that section, and to make permanent the authority for individual terrorists to be treated as agents of foreign powers under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978.

McConnell motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations for a period of 14 days.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until the cloture vote will be equally divided between the managers or their designees. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak as in morning business.

ZIKA VIRUS

Mr. President, the statement just made by the Senate Democratic leader on the Zika challenge to the United States is well documented. What is well documented is that the President of the United States came to Congress 4 months ago and said: We are facing a public health threat. Do something.

For 4 months the Republican-led Congress has done nothing. Meanwhile, the mosquitoes carrying this deadly virus are on the march.

This is a report from the New York Times from last week which I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD in its entirety.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, June 17, 2016]

U.S. OFFICIALS ARE SURPRISED BY ZIKA RATE IN PUERTO RICO

(By Catherine Saint Louis)

Roughly 1 percent of recent blood donors in Puerto Rico showed signs of active infection with the Zika virus, suggesting that a substantial portion of the island's population will become infected, federal health officials reported on Friday.

From April 3 to June 11, testing of 12,700 donations at blood centers in Puerto Rico identified 68 infected donors, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Over all, about 0.5 percent of donors had active Zika infections, but the prevalence rose to 1.1 percent in the week ending June 11. The virus, carried by the yellow fever mosquito, has been linked to birth defects in infants and neurological problems in adults.

"There are a lot more Zika-positive people than we would anticipate this early" in the outbreak, said Phillip Williamson, an author of the C.D.C. report and the vice president of operations at Creative Testing Solutions, a blood-donor testing laboratory.

Based on prior experience, Dr. Williamson said he would not have expected so many Zika-infected donors until late June or at early July.

The C.D.C. has estimated that as many as a quarter of the island's 3.5 million people may become infected with the Zika virus this year.

"It's possible that thousands of pregnant women in Puerto Rico could be infected," Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, the agency's director, told Reuters on Friday, leading to "dozens or hundreds of infants being born with microcephaly in the coming year."

Zika-contaminated donations are removed from the blood supply. In the continental

United States, where local transmission of the virus has yet to be reported, most blood banks are not yet using the experimental screening test used in Puerto Rico, which was made by Roche Diagnostics.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this article is entitled, "U.S. Officials Are Surprised by Zika Rate in Puerto Rico."

It goes on: "Roughly 1 percent of recent blood donors in Puerto Rico showed signs of active infection with the Zika virus, suggesting that a substantial portion of the island's population will become infected, federal health officials reported on Friday."

They go on to cite the statistics that have been analyzed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and here is what they concluded:

Based on prior experience, Dr. Williamson [of the CDC] said he would not have expected so many Zika-infected donors until late June or early July.

The CDC has estimated that as many as a quarter of the island's 3.5 million people may become infected with the Zika virus this year.

"It's possible that thousands of pregnant women in Puerto Rico could be infected," Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, [the CDC's] director, told Reuters . . . leading to "dozens or hundreds of infants being born with microcephaly in the coming year."

What is the Republican majority waiting for in the U.S. Senate? What is the Republican majority waiting for in the U.S. House of Representatives?

Don't they believe this is a serious public health threat? If they don't, they are ignoring the obvious—evidence given to us by the leading public health defense agency in the United States of America, if not the world. Over and over again, they tell us this is a deadly threat. While the infection rates increase and the infections among pregnant women increase and the number of these infants who are afflicted by serious birth defects increase, the Republicans in the House and Senate are too busy focusing on Donald Trump to pay attention to this public health crisis. It is about time they accepted the reality, and the reality is they were elected to lead, they were elected to protect, they were elected to serve, and when it comes to the Zika virus, they are doing none of this. They are standing back, twisted in knots, trying to figure out how to take money away from other public health challenges to deal with this, and 4 months have passed. These mosquitoes are spreading this infection across Puerto Rico, and soon we will know more in the United States.

Senator REID suggested there were 2,000 Americans with the Zika virus infection; 400—if I recall his numbers correctly—pregnant women, and there is already evidence of babies here being born afflicted because of this infection. What is the Republican majority waiting for?

FIGHTING TERRORISM

Mr. President, the Senate Republican leader came to the floor earlier this morning to speak to us about ISIL and