

The Fraternal Order of Police has asked Congress “to adopt the conference report” on behalf of its more than 330,000 members. They call it another “tool to reduce the deaths from this epidemic.”

So we are just one step away from sending this legislation to the President's desk. The House overwhelmingly passed it by a vote of 407 to 5. With continued cooperation, the Senate can send it to the President this week.

Remember, this Senate has provided more than twice as much funding for opioid-related issues as under the previous Senate majority. Let me say that again. This Senate has provided more than twice as much funding for opioid-related issues as under the previous Senate majority. The passage of CARA would represent another crucial step toward combating this crisis.

Of course, this wouldn't have been possible without the unwavering commitment of Members like Senator PORTMAN, Senator AYOTTE, Senator GRASSLEY, and Senator ALEXANDER to move this bill forward. From raising awareness about this crisis to serving as voices for the voiceless and working across the aisle to develop this comprehensive legislative response, these Senators were resolute in their support. In no small part, because of their efforts to drive this bill forward, communities will be better equipped to prevent heroin and prescription opioid abuse in the first place, just as they will be better equipped to save lives and foster treatment and recovery.

I also want to recognize the work of Democratic Members like Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator KLOBUCHAR for their efforts to help garner support for this bill and move it through the legislative process. There is no reason every Senator shouldn't support it now. The sooner we send this bill to the President's desk, the sooner we can help our communities begin to heal from the prescription opioid and heroin crisis.

Another way to do that is by passing the conference report that would fight Zika and enact record levels of funding for veterans' medical services, including millions for substance abuse and treatment. Democrats are clearly very nervous about their decision to attack women's health and veterans with the filibuster of the anti-Zika funding bill. Who can blame them? They put forth a variety of tortured excuses that don't stand up to scrutiny. They have offered a proposal they hoped would provide political cover by ditching funding for our Nation's veterans. That is clearly not a solution.

I don't know how Democrats plan to explain any of this to veterans this summer. I certainly don't know how Democrats plan to explain this to pregnant mothers. Either Democrats believe Zika is a crisis that requires immediate action or they do not. Republicans believe we ought to pass this bill now because this is a crisis. Our friends across the aisle will have to decide if

they feel the same or if a partisan political group is worth delaying funding to protect families from Zika or funding our veterans.

There is only one option to get anti-Zika funding on the President's desk before September; that is, passing the compromise Zika control and veterans funding legislation that is before us and sending it down to the President for signature.

The rules don't allow for a conference report to be amended, and repassing the same bill that went to conference will not put a bill on the President's desk, it will not create a vaccine, it will not kill a single mosquito, and it will not help a single pregnant mother. So let's do the right thing for our Nation and pass the legislation that is before us.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CARA AND MILCON-VA AND ZIKA VIRUS FUNDING LEGISLATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the tortured explanation from my friend the Republican leader this morning about two important issues—opioids and Zika—is an indication of why the Republicans will no longer have the majority come election day. That is very clear. You can't go on doing what they are doing and expect people to support you.

In the morning, we are going to vote on opioid legislation. It is important we do that. Everyone in this Chamber knows we have to do something to stop this epidemic. It has claimed the lives of too many Americans, and it is doing it every day. Our CARA conference report is a start, but it is a missed opportunity to do something really substantive to stem the number of opioid overdoses across the country, and the reason for that is Republicans refused to allocate money for this legislation.

To have my friend talk about we have done twice as much as we did under the previous majority—why wasn't anything done before? Because it was filibustered. We couldn't do it. There is not enough money to do all the authorizing we have done for these programs. There is not enough money.

In conference, Republicans again rejected our efforts to insert funding into the report. Authorizing legislation is a start, but without resources it is very meaningless. Without any real funding, the conference report comes up really short.

For example, editorials around the country have said as much, and I will pick on one—the New York Times editorial board. This morning, in their piece entitled “Congress Is Voting on an Inadequate Opioid Bill,” they say:

Congress is about to pass a bill meant to deal with the nation's opioid epidemic. It contains some good ideas. It will also be far

less effective at saving lives than it should be.

The Senate is expected to vote on this measure, approved by the House on Friday by an overwhelming 407-to-5 majority. It would authorize addiction treatment and prevention programs to stem what has become a scourge and a disgrace—more than 28,600 overdose deaths in 2014.

And it has gotten worse, not better, but this legislation contains not a penny to support any of these initiatives.

Continuing to read from the article:

The bill would allow the federal government to award grants to states to treat people who are hooked on prescription painkillers and illicit drugs like heroin. In Congress, however, getting a program authorized is only half the battle. Republican leaders say they will allocate funding when lawmakers return to Washington after a seven-week break that begins at the end of this week and ends after Labor Day. Yet there is no good reason for Congress to put off a vote on funding, given the urgency of the problem.

Quoting again, the editorial ends with a further funding caution:

Many lawmakers, especially those who are up for reelection, clearly want to show voters they are doing something about opioids. This bill amounts to progress, but it will not change the trajectory of this epidemic.

That says it all.

Without real funding, this legislation is far from adequate. If we want to stop the increasing number of opioid overdoses, then we need to get serious about finding a way to do it. One way is funding our Nation's response to this scourge.

So I repeat, it is no wonder that there will be a change in the majority of this body with what went on, as evidenced by this morning's statement by my friend the Republican leader. To talk about a tortured explanation on Zika, the Zika problem we have in America today is significant. Last night, 39 new cases were reported in 1 day in America.

These mosquitoes are ravaging—basically two breeds of mosquitoes are causing these problems. They are vicious. They are awful. Mosquitoes have been bad for generations, making people sick and causing people to die, but this is new. Never in the history of all the problems mosquitoes have caused have they caused birth defects. But they do now, and they do it big-time. The President is aware of the issue. He is aware of the issue. It is a very, very frightening thing for our country.

In May, the Senate passed a bipartisan compromise to address this crisis. The bill wasn't perfect. The legislation called for \$1.1 billion in funding and was well short of the \$1.9 billion health experts said was needed to address the crisis, but it was OK. It was certainly a step forward, and 89 Senators—Democrats and Republicans—agreed it was a good step forward. The Senate compromise at the very least was a step in the right direction. That is why, in spite of our serious reservations about the lack of adequate funding, we voted for this legislation, and I am glad we