

## ZIKA VIRUS FUNDING

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, on a separate topic, I rise today to discuss the spread of the Zika virus. As many of my colleagues know, I have been calling for funding to confront this crisis to be included in the continuing resolution Congress is hopefully going to pass in the coming weeks.

First, in light of tonight's vote, I want to take a step back and look at how we have gotten to this point. I want us to think about how long we have known about this crisis. I want us to think about how many warning signs had to be ignored for us to still be having this debate. And I want all the American people who are concerned about and impacted by the virus to know the truth about our deliberations up to this point.

The truth is that every Senator has known about the Zika virus since at least January. We all knew then that it was a threat. The World Health Organization warned in January that Zika would spread throughout most of the Americas by the end of this year. In February, as the number of travel-related cases in the United States grew, President Obama made an emergency spending request of \$1.9 billion. I supported that request. The vast majority of Congress, for political reasons, did not. So the virus continued to spread.

Since then, I have come to the floor of the Senate to urge my colleagues to take action on Zika on at least eight separate occasions. I have written letters, I have written laws, and I have supported every single Zika proposal that has come before the Senate regardless of which party wrote it. Tonight will mark the 12th time—the 12th time—I have voted to move forward on funding to take on Zika.

But tonight, for the third time, the minority party—the Democrats in the Senate—have blocked more funding to fight this virus. And I want to be frank. At times, my own party has not taken the issue seriously enough either. In the eight times I have come to the floor to deliver speeches about this issue, I have called out both parties, and I have repeatedly warned it was only a matter of time before we had a mosquito transition in the mainland of the United States. Tragically, that time has now come and, with it, an increase in infections.

In July, when we last voted on this issue, there were approximately 1,300 cases of Zika in the continental United States and 2,900 cases in U.S. territories. Since that time in July, these numbers have more than doubled to over 2,700 cases of Zika in the continental United States and over 14,000 cases in U.S. territories, particularly Puerto Rico. That includes 625 pregnant women whose babies are now at risk of complications, including very serious ones like microcephaly.

These are not statistics. These are real people. As the infection rate continues to snowball, our health officials and experts desperately need addi-

tional resources to combat this crisis. I continue to support supplemental legislation to fund the fight against Zika, but we simply cannot afford to wait any longer. That is why I have requested that any legislation to fund the Federal Government beyond the 30th of September include additional resources to combat and, hopefully through a vaccine, eradicate the Zika virus.

For Congress, this is our moment of truth on this incredibly dangerous issue. We are going to continue to see more explosive growth in infections if people keep conspiring, for political reasons in an election year, to do nothing. My colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both Chambers—in the House and the Senate—now face a choice: Are the political points you hope to gain from posturing on this funding really more valuable than saving lives, protecting pregnant women, and preventing unborn children from being afflicted by this disease?

And ask yourself this: How will history remember this moment 20 years from now if, God forbid, there are hundreds or even thousands of children who are born with microcephaly while we stood here playing politics and did nothing? This has the potential to tarnish the legacy of our generation of national leaders and, far worse, to cause grave health challenges for an untold number of Americans.

My colleagues, for the life of me, I cannot understand why any Senator with any chance to do something about this would stand in the way any longer. My message to both parties and both Chambers for this month is simple and straightforward: Zika is not a game. And if you think it is, then you should take your game somewhere else. This issue is about human beings, not political chess pieces, and we have a duty to solve it. It will not stop until Congress does what is necessary to respond to this public health crisis. Enough waiting. Enough games. Congress needs to act, and it needs to act now.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

## REMEMBERING DR. DONALD HENDERSON AND THE ERADICATION OF SMALLPOX

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, while my colleagues and I were back home in Ohio, Michigan, Arizona or Florida over the last number of weeks, this country lost one of the heroes in the fight to eradicate smallpox: Lakewood, OH, native and Oberlin College graduate Dr. Donald Henderson. Dr. Henderson passed away at age 87 on August 19. He left behind perhaps the most important public health legacy of anyone in the 20th century.

Along with Dr. William Foege, who is still alive and still very active, Dr. Henderson helped lead the war on humankind's most feared diseases and

achieved one of the greatest public health victories ever—very arguably maybe the most important public health victory—the eradication of smallpox.

Most Americans are too young to remember the fear that smallpox struck in the hearts of people around the globe. Because of the work of literally 150,000 workers—paid workers and volunteers, thousands and thousands, tens of thousands of public health workers—fewer and fewer of us bear the scars on our upper arms that serve as a reminder of the danger this disease once posed.

In the 20th Century, it is estimated that more than 300 million people died of smallpox. Think of that. More than 300 million people died of smallpox—at least. Some estimates are as high as 500 million. The numbers aren't particularly precise, putting it mildly, because of where the deaths occurred and how they occurred and what people were dying of in addition to smallpox. Because of the serious investment our country and the world made in stamping out this disease, we no longer live in fear.

I think there are some lessons here. I just listened to the Senator from Florida talk about the fact his party seems to want to load up the Zika virus funding with all kinds of political statements or wants to take the money from some other public health fund and move it into the Zika virus, which is different from what we did as a nation to combat smallpox. What we did as a nation to combat smallpox had nothing to do with political parties; it was all about making sure that we came together as a nation and around the world.

It was an expensive and serious investment. It was a massive international effort. It mobilized epidemiologists—well-paid epidemiologists and laboratories and low-paid health care workers in India and South Asia and parts of Africa across the globe. Dr. Foege wrote an amazing account of this campaign in his 2011 book called "House on Fire."

The smallpox vaccine had existed since the late 18th century. Dr. Edward Jenner developed the first successful vaccine in fighting cowpox. We all learned that in high school. But having the science wasn't enough to actually get people vaccinated to allay people's fears of what a vaccination could mean. Injecting a virus into somebody's arm obviously was a bit counterintuitive: That is going to make me well rather than sick? But to deal with the outbreaks would take action and coordination on a scale never before seen.

The title of the book "House on Fire" refers to the way a young Indian doctor described the approach to the vaccination campaign: You pour water on the house that is burning. When an outbreak happened, that village and the ones immediately surrounding it needed to be vaccinated. That fire