

So I have another job for them. Why don't they investigate Donald Trump? They can do it quickly. They are all set to do this. They don't mind spending taxpayer dollars. All these investigations of the Clinton operation have always been taxpayer dollars. They should take a cue from the attorney general of the State of New York and hold Trump accountable for scamming charities, the IRS, and the American people.

Donald Trump desperately wants people to believe that he is a brilliant, rich, rich businessman. In reality he is a silver-spoon-toting fraud who would never make it in the real world without his father's money. That is why Trump's entire business career has been one scam after another, such as in Atlantic City where he cheated everybody and got rich at the expense of others. If there is one reason Atlantic City has gone downhill—and it has—it is Donald Trump.

He is always looking for a mark, some victim for one of his scams, because he is incapable of making money honestly. Now our country is Trump's next target. He wants this to be the biggest payoff ever.

Mr. President, I think it is time to announce the business of the day.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

#### LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 5325, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 516, H.R. 5325, a bill making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

#### ZIKA VIRUS FUNDING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I can still recall the first briefing I had as a Member of Congress on something called HIV/AIDS. I didn't know much about it. I heard the words, but I didn't understand them until this briefing brought to mind and brought to light the serious threat this was to the health of thousands of people in the United States and around the world. It was a frightening moment. The information we received led us to believe quite honestly that this was the public health crisis of our time.

There was a response that I was surprised by. Despite all the controversy around all the values and issues, President Ronald Reagan and his Surgeon General Koop stepped forward and showed real leadership.

Some argued that President Reagan waited too long. I am going to put that argument aside. The day came when the Surgeon General sent a letter to every American family telling them the threat of this public health crisis. It was the right thing to do. We dealt with it in an honest, forthright way. We appropriated massive amounts of money for treatment research, and we have come a long way in saving the lives of many who were threatened by this deadly disease.

It is rare when a President of the United States steps up and says to the American people: We have a public health crisis. Because it is so rare, we should take it very seriously.

In February of this year, President Obama made that plea to Congress about a new public health crisis involving the Zika infection. Zika, of course, is borne by mosquitoes. There is evidence in countries around the world that when these mosquitoes bite someone and infect them, it has a negative health consequence, particularly on pregnant women and the babies they carry.

President Obama came to Congress in February of this year and in a rare moment announced that we had an emergency, a public health crisis that needed to be addressed. He asked for \$1.9 billion to eradicate the mosquitoes and also to develop a vaccine to protect innocent Americans.

I took that seriously. Unfortunately, the Republican leadership in Congress did not. It wasn't until May, some 3 months later, that the Senate passed a response to the President's request for this public health emergency called Zika. We passed a bill that had about \$1.1 billion in it—not what the President asked for but a substantial investment toward his goal of protecting America and developing a vaccine, and we passed it with an overwhelming bipartisan vote. Some 89 Senators from both parties voted for it in May of this year. That, of course, was 4 months ago.

What happened after the Senate with a strong bipartisan vote responded to the President's request for emergency funding for a public health crisis involving Zika? What happened to this bill after it passed the Senate? It went to the House of Representatives. Unfortunately, that is where it took a bad turn. Instead of passing the obvious bipartisan bill in response to the President, the House Republicans insisted on delaying it further and adding provisions that were politically controversial and really were unnecessary to our goal of protecting America from this crisis.

They added a provision that said that if you were a woman seeking family planning so that your pregnancy was not compromised by the Zika virus, you could not use the Planned Parenthood agencies for those family planning consultations. Why would they pick Planned Parenthood? Because the Republican Party is at war with

Planned Parenthood. They are willing to stop even their family planning functions.

Two million American women went to Planned Parenthood last year. They count on them for professional services they can trust and afford. The Republicans want to close it down. They have voted repeatedly to do that. So they chose this Zika emergency public health crisis bill to do that again.

They took \$500 million slated for the Veterans' Administration to expedite the consideration of claims by our veterans and eliminated that money in the VA—put it toward the Zika virus.

Third, they decided to suspend the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency when it came to monitoring and overseeing the chemicals that would be sprayed to kill these mosquitoes.

Finally, in the ultimate political act, they put in a provision that eliminated the prohibition against displaying a Confederate flag at a U.S. military cemetery. That is what happens when legislation that starts off as very simple, pointed, and direct runs amok and becomes a political freighter, carrying all of these issues.

That is what happened and, of course, the Republicans in the House knew what would follow. The bill would run into resistance, and the Senate would be bogged down. Instead of taking the simple funding bill the Senate passed overwhelmingly with a bipartisan vote, the Republicans complicated the situation dramatically and brought the whole conversation to a stop.

So here we are today. The President's request was in February; we are now in September. Congress has yet to send the President the resources he asked for. At what cost? Well, we know the cost. At this point we estimate that by the end of the year in Puerto Rico, 25 percent of the people on that island will be infected with the Zika virus, including presently about 1,000 women in Puerto Rico. We know that they are in danger and that the babies they give birth to will have serious life-threatening birth defects because of that infection—an infection that might have been slowed down or even avoided had this Congress under Republican control responded to President Obama's request for emergency public health funding for this Zika epidemic.

As of last week there were 20,870 reported cases of Zika in the United States and its territories. That included 1,897 pregnant women, and in Illinois there are 70 of these women. We estimate about 700 or 800 women in America in the continental United States have been infected by this virus, with another 1,000, as I mentioned, in Puerto Rico.

If we had responded quickly in a responsible bipartisan way when the President made his request, I don't know whether some of these families and women and their babies could have been spared. We will never know, but