

CARLOS CURBELO
26TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

EDUCATION AND THE
WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

WEB PAGE:
www.curbelo.house.gov



1429 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2778

12851 SW 42ND STREET
SUITE 131
MIAMI, FL 33175
(305) 222-0160

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0926

June 21, 2016

Congressional Conferees Appointed to H.R. 4794/H.R. 5243
U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Conference Committee Members:

Given the significant impact that the Zika virus could have on our communities, I respectfully request that you allocate sufficient resources to combat and prevent the disease as you consider the Conference Report on H.R. 4974, the Military, Veterans Affairs, and Related Appropriations Act, 2017/ H.R. 5243, Zika Response Appropriations Act.

Since the President's \$1.9 billion dollar request in emergency funding to respond to the Zika virus, the number of cases in the United States has increased significantly. Many of those infected are pregnant woman whose newborns are at risk of birth defects including microcephaly.

I respectfully ask the Conference Committee to act with the sense of urgency that is required when responding to a threat of this magnitude. The funding package must support vaccine development, surveillance and vector control, research, community education efforts, and other important measures that will protect the American public.

It is imperative that the Conference Committee provide adequate resources that the experts say is required. The House bill, which provides \$622 million, falls short of the funding necessary to address the increasing likelihood of not only additional travel related cases, but locally transmitted cases as well. I appreciate the Senate Amendment to H.R. 2577 that included \$1.1 billion of Zika funding, a step forward in fully satisfying the President's request. As the Conference Committee debates and finalizes this spending package, I encourage you to consider a funding level as close as possible to the President's request of \$1.9 billion to address this serious issue appropriately.

New and troubling information about the Zika virus is consistently being released. In fact, we may not even know how widespread the infection actually is, since four out of five individuals do not exhibit symptoms. We cannot risk the safety of the American people, so it is time to respond with robust funding that will allow for the necessary tools to stop the spread of Zika.

As the Conference Committee prepares to release its final Report, I encourage you to do everything you can to provide the required resources to combat this threat and protect American families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carlos Curbelo".

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