

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 15, 2016

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama,

The Zika virus is a real and present threat to our country, and we have been diligently working to secure funding to meet this challenge. We are shocked and disappointed by the misinformation that has been spread about the Zika funding compromise negotiated by the House and Senate. We strongly urge you to help stop the mis-information being spread and encourage bipartisan support and swift enactment of this legislation to properly prepare for imminent dangers posed by the spread of the Zika virus.

As families travel for summer vacations and mosquito season is in full gear, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other agencies are working around the clock to protect us and our loved ones from the spread of the Zika virus. In this public health emergency, the speed of a solution is imperative. As the number of Zika cases in the U.S. grows, so does the number of mosquitos that can transmit the virus. The Zika virus is attacking moms and babies and poses a serious national public health threat, and Georgia, along with other Southeastern states, is in the firing line for potential outbreaks.

The Administration must abandon partisan politics and act now so that health officials can track the mosquitos, improve mosquito control methods, develop an effective vaccine, improve the accuracy and speed of tests, expand laboratory capacity, and begin robust tracking of babies born to women exposed to Zika virus.

As we have seen this year with the Zika virus, international public health threats are unpredictable and have no regard for national borders. The spread of this disease throughout multiple regions and the recent cases of local transmission of Zika in Florida emphasizes the importance of these resources to ensure global disease protection and emergency preparedness and response.

There have been several mischaracterizations of the Zika conference report proposed by Congress surrounding health services for women. However, there are no provisions in the conference report that restrict women's health services, and any Medicaid provider is eligible to be paid with these funds. In fact, this structure mirrors your own request to fund primary health care through the Medicaid program.

Officials within your Administration have suggested that you would veto the conference report, which appropriates \$1.1 billion to fight Zika here and abroad, although we have not seen a formal Statement of Administration Policy. However, CDC Director Frieden's written testimony

at a July 13<sup>th</sup> Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing stated that CDC “urgently needs a surge of resources to prevent and control the spread of Zika virus in the U.S. Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and other U.S. territories...the emergence and reemergence of health threats, including those spread by mosquitoes and other vectors, will continue for the foreseeable future. These outbreaks cannot be expected to occur in isolation.”

There is an apparent disconnect between CDC’s urgency to procure this critical funding and the absence of action by your Administration to put politics aside and reach agreement. We are concerned about the mothers and babies the virus is attacking. We are concerned about the dozens of cases of Zika in Georgia and the more than ten million people in Georgia who are at risk of contracting and spreading the virus every day that passes without action.

For these reasons, we respectfully pose the following questions:

1. Your Administration’s veto threat has led some to believe that if the Administration is refusing funds, this funding may not be urgent and critical. Are you able to dispel this assumption?
2. If the Senate passes the Zika conference report, will you sign it?
3. Recognizing that some members of the Senate have raised concerns with aspects of the conference report, do you believe it is more important to get Zika funding enacted now and then go back and address those concerns later, or should we wait until those concerns can be fully resolved before finalizing a Zika funding bill?
4. Please elaborate on how your Administration will fill the gap if funds are not provided before Congress returns on September 6<sup>th</sup>?
5. How much of the \$589 million reprogrammed Zika funds are being distributed in Georgia? Please provide a detailed account of how these funds are being utilized in Georgia to maximize success of ongoing efforts.
6. When the current supply of transferred funds is depleted, please detail how your Administration plans to continue prevention and response measures. Will efforts in certain areas cease?

We urge you to make this public health crisis a priority and ensure CDC and other agencies working on the front line for our nation’s public health have the resources they need to keep America safe. We look forward to your response by August 21, 2016. If your staff has any questions, please have them contact Jordan Bartolomeo on Senator Isakson’s staff at 202-228-5441.

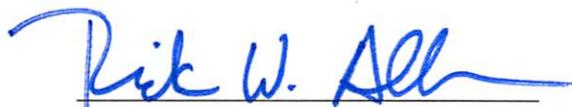
Sincerely,



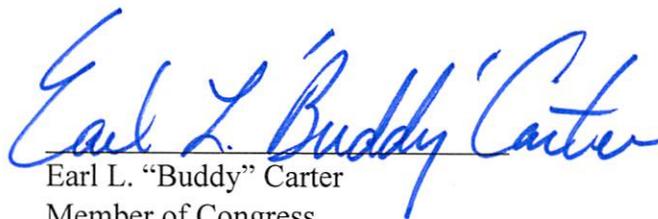
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U.S. Senator



David Perdue  
U.S. Senator



Rick W. Allen  
Member of Congress



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress



Doug Collins  
Member of Congress



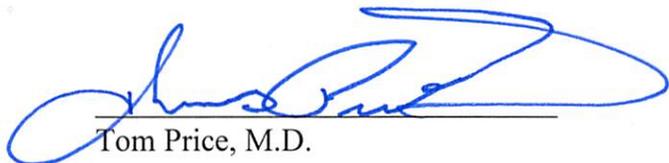
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cc: Secretary Sylvia Burwell