

STEPHEN F. LYNCH
8TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL MARKETS AND
GOVERNMENT SPONSORED ENTERPRISES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
AND CONSUMER CREDIT

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM

RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL SECURITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

ASSISTANT DEMOCRATIC WHIP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2109

2369 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-8273
(202) 225-3984 FAX

88 BLACK FALCON AVENUE
SUITE 340
BOSTON, MA 02210
617-428-2000
617-428-2011 FAX

PLYMOUTH COUNTY REGISTRY BUILDING
155 WEST ELM STREET
SUITE 200
BROCKTON, MA 02301
508-586-5555
508-580-4692 FAX

1245 HANCOCK STREET
SUITE 16
QUINCY, MA 02169
617-657-6305
617-773-0995 FAX

LYNCH.HOUSE.GOV

August 2, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230 U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Speaker Ryan:

As Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on National Security, I strongly urge you to call Congress back into session as soon as practicable in order to fully fund the emergency Zika virus funding request submitted by President Obama to Congress on February 22, 2016. The \$1.9 billion in requested emergency funding will afford our federal, state, and local agencies the resources necessary to undertake a comprehensive and robust approach to combatting the global Zika epidemic.

The recent *Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community* issued by Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper classified the Zika virus as an emerging human and global security threat that is projected to cause as many as 4 million cases in 2016 in the Western Hemisphere alone and spread “to virtually every” Western Hemisphere country. Real-time Zika virus updates provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) only continue to confirm this health and security assessment. On July 31, 2016, CDC Director Thomas Frieden reported that “Zika is now here in the continental U.S.” after the agency verified that a several-block area in downtown Miami, Florida has active and mosquito-borne transmission of the Zika virus. Director Frieden also warned of a continuing risk of active transmission in the area given the discovery by Florida health officials of persistent mosquito populations and the diagnosis of additional regional Zika cases. On August 1, 2016, the CDC issued an unprecedented U.S. continental travel warning advising pregnant women against travel to the infected area.

The mosquito-transmitted Zika outbreak in southern Florida follows the CDC’s identification, as of July 27, 2016, of at least 1,658 Zika cases in the continental U.S. and Hawaii resulting from travel abroad, sexual transmission, and laboratory exposure. Among these travel-related Zika infections are 449 reported cases in New York, 307 reported cases in Florida, 87 reported cases in California, 76 reported cases in Texas, and 52 reported cases in Massachusetts. The CDC also reported that the Zika epidemic has already posed a serious health and security threat to U.S. territories including Puerto Rico, where Zika infections are “increasing rapidly,” with over 5,500 diagnosed Zika cases, including nearly 700 infected pregnant women. Moreover, the Department of Defense recently reported that at least 33 active-duty service members have contracted the Zika virus outside the continental U.S. this year and that as a result,


the agency must currently monitor U.S. military bases and installations at risk for mosquito-borne diseases.

Clearly, our comprehensive response to combat the spread of the Zika virus in the U.S. and worldwide cannot wait for Congress to reconvene in September and only then begin considering approval of the President's \$1.9 billion emergency funding request. As underscored by CDC Director Frieden again last week, the lead U.S. agency designated to coordinate and implement our Zika response efforts is continuing to fight an unparalleled global health threat with "with one hand tied behind our backs" given the lack of sufficient resources.

The February 22, 2016 letter submitted by President Obama to the House and Senate Leadership details that this emergency funding would be used to immediately enhance our domestic and international Zika response activities. These include efforts undertaken by the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development designed to prevent the spread of Zika virus transmission, improve Zika detection, and accelerate vaccine research and development. The requested emergency funding would also assist states, localities, and U.S. territories in developing enhanced mosquito control and tracking operations and improve their public health systems to detect and respond to regional Zika infections.

For these reasons, I again respectfully urge you to call Congress back into session so that we can promptly consider the President's emergency funding request and provide the resources necessary to combat the Zika epidemic across all levels of government. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



STEPHEN F. LYNCH
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security
(MA-08)

cc: The Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States

The Honorable Harry Reid, Minority Leader, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Democratic Leader, U.S. House of Representatives