

and this could impair Puerto Rico's chances of getting on a path to stability and eventual growth.

The people of Puerto Rico are already suffering, as I saw firsthand on my most recent visit there. About 80 percent of businesses have closed in the Plaza de Diego, once the heart of San Juan's business district. Doctors at the island's only neonatal intensive care unit described how they can order dialysis treatment for premature newborns only if they pay cash-on-demand daily for lifesaving drugs. While we do not know the full ramifications if Congress fails to act before the end of the month, we know for certain that it is the 3.5 million American citizens who live in Puerto Rico who will be further harmed.

Congress must do more in the future to address long-term economic growth and Medicaid inequalities in Puerto Rico, but doing nothing now to end the debt crisis will result in a chaotic, disorderly unwinding with widespread consequences. Some well-funded creditors are working hard to delay legislative action this week, even if it comes at the expense of the Puerto Rican people. I urge Republicans and Democrats to come together in the Senate as you have before to help our fellow citizens, and get a bipartisan bill to the President's desk before July 1.

Sincerely,

JACOB J. LEW.

ESTADO LIBRE ASOCIADO DE
PUERTO RICO GOBERNADOR,
San Juan, PR, June 22, 2016.

Hon. BILL NELSON,

Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR NELSON: I write to request that you vote in favor of the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA) before the end of the month. On July 1, 2016, more than \$1 billion in general obligations and Commonwealth guaranteed bonds are due. We do not have the cash to make those payments. A default of that magnitude, without the automatic stay granted by PROMESA, will affect our ability to pay our public workers, including police, nurses and therapists for special needs children.

For more than a year we have been requesting Congress to provide us the tools we need to restructure all the debt. The House of Representatives passed PROMESA, which provides Puerto Rico a solution to its decade-long economic crisis. Although imperfect and intrusive to Puerto Rico's autonomy, it is the only alternative available to reach a sustainable level of debt. PROMESA also protects us from all creditor litigation. The fiscal crisis we inherited does not leave us any options.

The 3.5 million United States citizens on the island are threatened by a debt crisis that can disrupt essential public services such as health, security and education. As Governor, I am responsible for protecting the safety and well-being of the people of Puerto Rico. PROMESA is just the first step in what will be Puerto Rico's long road to recovery. I urge you to approve PROMESA before July 1st, 2016.

Sincerely,

ALEJANDRO J. GARCIA-PADILLA,
*The Governor of the Commonwealth of
Puerto Rico.*

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I will close by saying that we can't let these people dangle there anymore. We have to come to the aid of our fellow American citizens. Let's remember that when it comes to time of war, Puerto Rico provides some of the bravest military people we have. Let's re-

member they serve this Nation honorably. Now let's try to help them.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

ZIKA VIRUS FUNDING

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, we will soon vote on a bill that would provide funding for a coordinated response to the Zika virus—a virus that has already ravaged many parts of Latin America and places like Puerto Rico. Over the past few weeks, our Democratic friends have repeatedly stressed the urgency of this matter. And the summer months coming are likely to bring us more mosquitoes, which, of course, are the primary vector that carries this virus. Thankfully, in the United States, no one who has contracted the Zika virus has done so through a mosquito; it has been from people traveling to Central and South America, who have been bitten there—at least that is according to most current statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We know they are coming, and we need to act with dispatch.

I know many of our friends across the aisle were very eager to get this done because they came down and made unanimous consent requests for \$1.9 billion. As you will recall, the Senate passed an appropriation for \$1.1 billion, and the only difference between the House and Senate was whether this would be deficit spending or whether it would actually be offset or paid for, which was the House's position. I think the House had the better argument. If we could pay for it, that would be ideal, but I think everybody agrees we need to get moving quickly to protect our communities.

Of course, the people most vulnerable to the Zika virus are women of childbearing age. If a mosquito carrying Zika were to bite you, you might not even notice it or you might feel as though you have had a little flu symptom for a day and then it would go away. We simply don't know enough about how long the virus is retained in the body, so even if a woman isn't pregnant when she is bitten, the fact that she was bitten and is of childbearing age and what that might mean is an unknown. It is frightening, particularly if you are a woman of childbearing age.

I hope we will act with dispatch. I know it is not fast enough for some of our colleagues who wanted us to do this without the usual conference committee with the House to try to reconcile differences, but we need to get this done. It is surprising now to hear some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle say they actually plan to filibuster this legislation, and the President apparently is indicating he might veto it. I am really interested to hear how they arrived from point A to point B, having taken the position several weeks ago that we ought do it im-

mediately, and now, once it has come to fruition, saying we can simply blow it up, that it is not good enough, and not complete our work here.

It really is unfortunate. I hope cooler heads prevail. This country is on the verge of a public health crisis, and talking to Governor Abbott in Texas and also the public health officials there, I know they are very concerned about what this means. And I am sure, like the preceding speaker from Florida—Florida, Louisiana, and Texas are some very temperate, warm weather regions and are particularly vulnerable to this particular type of mosquito and this virus, but it could spread to other parts of the country, too, unless we act with dispatch tomorrow to approve this conference report and to get this bill to the President's desk and to get the money to the researchers and the people trying to develop a vaccine, which ultimately may be the ultimate tool in the toolbox so the people can be vaccinated so that, for example, women who are of childbearing age don't have to worry about the possibility of acquiring this disease or what it might mean to their unborn child.

We need to make sure the doctors and the researchers and other public health officials on the front lines get the resources they need. The good news is that—taking some advice from the Senate and the House, Republicans, in particular—the President decided to reprogram \$589 million left over in the Ebola account. They did that a few weeks ago. As of earlier this month, only \$40 million of that \$589 million has been obligated. There is a cushion there, but I think we should be careful about acting complacently when it comes to dealing with this particular crisis, or impending crisis.

For the President and some of our colleagues who have been insistent that we act on this now to say “We are going to filibuster it” or “The President will actually veto it” is really pretty hard to get your head around, unless you conclude it is completely disingenuous and irresponsible. I would like to give our colleagues a little more credit than that. I am anxious to hear how they have changed their position so dramatically from just a few weeks ago.

We will vote on this proposal tomorrow, and I hope that cooler heads will prevail and our colleagues will vote to support it, so we can quickly get the urgent resources needed to those public health services that are studying the virus, working on prevention—including mosquito eradication, which is an important part of this—as well as creating a vaccine.

The minority leader, in particular, spent a considerable amount of time on the floor stressing how dire the need is to fund Zika prevention efforts. He and the rest of his caucus will have a clear choice. They can either play politics at the expense of the mothers and the children across the country, or they can simply decide to do the right thing and support the bipartisan Zika bill.

FIGHTING TERRORISM

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, on another matter, the Senate has been discussing the need to respond to terrorist threats within our own borders. To recap, this isn't about people traveling from the United States to the Middle East and returning or people coming from the Middle East to the United States. It is about that, but primarily what we are worried about in Orlando is the radicalization of an American citizen by propaganda, poisonous propaganda being issued by the Islamic State, and that falls in a fertile field with particularly susceptible individuals like the shooter in Orlando.

That is one reason it is so important we complete our work on the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill. It keeps many of our counterterrorism efforts going by funding those who are on the frontlines, such as the FBI and other law enforcement. I hope we can get that legislation completed, too, and in so doing underscore our commitment to those public servants who defend the homeland.

We can't lose sight of the heart of the problem: a lack of any coherent plan to defeat ISIS and a foreign policy missing direction and leadership from the Commander in Chief, the President of the United States.

Over the past few days, it has become even clearer that not even those in the Obama administration are onboard with his short-sighted and reckless policies. First, more than 50 diplomats sent an internal protest memo to harshly criticize the President's Syria policy. You can find that draft version of the memo online. It is four frank pages, decrying Obama's failed wait-and-see-approach to Syria, from some of those who have been most involved with the policy.

The New York Times was forced to admit the number of signatures on it, 51, was "extremely large, if not unprecedented." I wish I had time to read the full memo aloud here, but let me quote from a few paragraphs—actually, from the final paragraph. It says:

The status quo in Syria will continue to present increasingly dire, if not disastrous, humanitarian, diplomatic, and terrorism-related challenges. For five years, the scale of these consequences has overwhelmed our efforts to deal with this conflict; the United States cannot contain the conflict with current policy. . . . [W]e firmly believe it is time the United States, guided by our strategic interests and moral convictions, lead a global effort to put an end to this conflict.

What an indictment of the leadership of the White House by people who are part of the Obama administration. I am grateful that these diplomats opted to stand up and be counted and tell the truth for our own security as well as those in the Middle East who are suffering so much. The administration's policies—really, their inaction—have languished for 5 years with all signs pointing to a much needed course correction. Still, even after the redlines were crossed by Syria's murderous dic-

tator and as the supposed JV team of terrorists are exporting deadly violence into our own country, the White House views its policies in a positive light. It is not just these diplomats working in the State Department of President Obama who are raising red flags.

Recently the CIA Director agreed with them while testifying before the Senate Intelligence Committee. He admitted we are further away from a diplomatic solution in Syria than a year ago, largely because of Russia's involvement in propping up the regime of Bashar al-Assad. He confirmed that ISIS, the Islamic State, is preparing to conduct further attacks, in part by training and encouraging its followers to carry out attacks in their home countries, such as the United States of America.

Contrary to the narrative the White House is selling, Director Brennan called ISIS a "formidable adversary" that is building a global terror network. He stressed that Libya, in particular, is a growing hotbed of Islamic extremism.

Recently I traveled to Tunisia with members of the House Homeland Security Committee, and we met with the Libyan country team—the U.S. Ambassador to Libya and the other members of that country team who had not even been able to go to Libya because it was so dangerous. They were actually working in exile in Tunisia next door.

Director Brennan called the ISIS offshoot in Libya the most developed and most dangerous branch of the terrorist group. How did we get here? President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton failed in their efforts to stabilize the country after toppling Qadhafi. Didn't we learn anything in Iraq? Apparently, the Obama administration did not. They had no plan for what to do once Qadhafi was gone. Evidently, President Obama opted to lead from behind during the military campaign and then not lead at all after Qadhafi fell.

Unfortunately, recent testimony from the President's nominee to head the U.S. forces in Africa, or AFRICOM, suggested the administration hadn't learned any lessons after this disaster. When asked whether there was a strategy in place for dealing with all the threats emanating from Libya, the nominee, the Marine Corps general who was testifying, said he wasn't aware of any strategy, even though he agreed that ISIS has a significant presence in Libya and constitutes an imminent threat to our country here at home.

Just a few days ago, an article in the Washington Post highlighted the difference between what our military leaders believe is necessary to accomplish the mission and what the White House begrudgingly agreed to give them, which is less than what they need. According to the article, U.S. commanders on the ground in Iraq are readying a request to the White House for more troops so we can help the

Iraqi Army secure Fallujah and eventually take back Mosul.

The article also notes that military leaders have been regularly highlighting the need for more troops in the region—and quickly—but are concerned the administration will be reluctant to commit more. That is because the President has instituted an artificial troop cap for Iraq and Syria—it is about the numbers, it is not about the mission—just like he did in Afghanistan, and he doesn't want to add to that no matter what happens.

Apparently, the foolish campaign promises the President made when he was running are more important to him now than actually defeating ISIS abroad. As it stands, his legacy will be leaving Iraq more unstable and more dangerous for U.S. interests than it was when he came into office.

This should be a no-brainer. We don't succeed on the battlefield when we ignore the counsel of the experts, our uniformed military leaders, and we can't succeed on the ground in Iraq when the President will not provide the resources necessary to carry out the operations he has asked them to perform. We don't need a bandaid. We don't need more calls for diplomacy and other hollow talking points in Libya. What we and the world need is American leadership and a commitment from the White House to root out and annihilate ISIS where it lives and breathes.

I doubt the Orlando shooter would have pledged allegiance to the leader of the Islamic State if we had done what our military leadership believes we should have already done, which was to crush ISIS and defeat it. I doubt the Orlando shooter would have pledged allegiance to a leader whose movement had been crushed and destroyed, but he did it because he felt they were winning.

When the watching world sees we lack the will to defeat ISIS, ISIS sympathizers around the world sense weakness, and they are emboldened in their plan to carry out attacks, including on U.S. soil. There is a direct relationship between the battlefield in Iraq and Syria and our neighborhoods and communities here in America. What happens there matters here.

When the request from our military leadership arrives at the President's desk asking for more resources, he should remember Orlando, and he should grant the request. If he refuses or dithers, any resulting failure in Iraq and Syria or further attacks on the homeland will be part of his lasting legacy. From our diplomatic corps to our intelligence community, to the leaders of our military, all have directly or indirectly challenged the President's foreign policy in just the last few days.

If you think about it, it is remarkable. It takes courage and real strength of conviction to buck the leader of your political party or of the administration. I hope the President listens to