

The Fraternal Order of Police has asked Congress “to adopt the conference report” on behalf of its more than 330,000 members. They call it another “tool to reduce the deaths from this epidemic.”

So we are just one step away from sending this legislation to the President's desk. The House overwhelmingly passed it by a vote of 407 to 5. With continued cooperation, the Senate can send it to the President this week.

Remember, this Senate has provided more than twice as much funding for opioid-related issues as under the previous Senate majority. Let me say that again. This Senate has provided more than twice as much funding for opioid-related issues as under the previous Senate majority. The passage of CARA would represent another crucial step toward combating this crisis.

Of course, this wouldn't have been possible without the unwavering commitment of Members like Senator PORTMAN, Senator AYOTTE, Senator GRASSLEY, and Senator ALEXANDER to move this bill forward. From raising awareness about this crisis to serving as voices for the voiceless and working across the aisle to develop this comprehensive legislative response, these Senators were resolute in their support. In no small part, because of their efforts to drive this bill forward, communities will be better equipped to prevent heroin and prescription opioid abuse in the first place, just as they will be better equipped to save lives and foster treatment and recovery.

I also want to recognize the work of Democratic Members like Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator KLOBUCHAR for their efforts to help garner support for this bill and move it through the legislative process. There is no reason every Senator shouldn't support it now. The sooner we send this bill to the President's desk, the sooner we can help our communities begin to heal from the prescription opioid and heroin crisis.

Another way to do that is by passing the conference report that would fight Zika and enact record levels of funding for veterans' medical services, including millions for substance abuse and treatment. Democrats are clearly very nervous about their decision to attack women's health and veterans with the filibuster of the anti-Zika funding bill. Who can blame them? They put forth a variety of tortured excuses that don't stand up to scrutiny. They have offered a proposal they hoped would provide political cover by ditching funding for our Nation's veterans. That is clearly not a solution.

I don't know how Democrats plan to explain any of this to veterans this summer. I certainly don't know how Democrats plan to explain this to pregnant mothers. Either Democrats believe Zika is a crisis that requires immediate action or they do not. Republicans believe we ought to pass this bill now because this is a crisis. Our friends across the aisle will have to decide if

they feel the same or if a partisan political group is worth delaying funding to protect families from Zika or funding our veterans.

There is only one option to get anti-Zika funding on the President's desk before September; that is, passing the compromise Zika control and veterans funding legislation that is before us and sending it down to the President for signature.

The rules don't allow for a conference report to be amended, and repassing the same bill that went to conference will not put a bill on the President's desk, it will not create a vaccine, it will not kill a single mosquito, and it will not help a single pregnant mother. So let's do the right thing for our Nation and pass the legislation that is before us.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CARA AND MILCON-VA AND ZIKA VIRUS FUNDING LEGISLATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the tortured explanation from my friend the Republican leader this morning about two important issues—opioids and Zika—is an indication of why the Republicans will no longer have the majority come election day. That is very clear. You can't go on doing what they are doing and expect people to support you.

In the morning, we are going to vote on opioid legislation. It is important we do that. Everyone in this Chamber knows we have to do something to stop this epidemic. It has claimed the lives of too many Americans, and it is doing it every day. Our CARA conference report is a start, but it is a missed opportunity to do something really substantive to stem the number of opioid overdoses across the country, and the reason for that is Republicans refused to allocate money for this legislation.

To have my friend talk about we have done twice as much as we did under the previous majority—why wasn't anything done before? Because it was filibustered. We couldn't do it. There is not enough money to do all the authorizing we have done for these programs. There is not enough money.

In conference, Republicans again rejected our efforts to insert funding into the report. Authorizing legislation is a start, but without resources it is very meaningless. Without any real funding, the conference report comes up really short.

For example, editorials around the country have said as much, and I will pick on one—the New York Times editorial board. This morning, in their piece entitled “Congress Is Voting on an Inadequate Opioid Bill,” they say:

Congress is about to pass a bill meant to deal with the nation's opioid epidemic. It contains some good ideas. It will also be far

less effective at saving lives than it should be.

The Senate is expected to vote on this measure, approved by the House on Friday by an overwhelming 407-to-5 majority. It would authorize addiction treatment and prevention programs to stem what has become a scourge and a disgrace—more than 28,600 overdose deaths in 2014.

And it has gotten worse, not better, but this legislation contains not a penny to support any of these initiatives.

Continuing to read from the article:

The bill would allow the federal government to award grants to states to treat people who are hooked on prescription painkillers and illicit drugs like heroin. In Congress, however, getting a program authorized is only half the battle. Republican leaders say they will allocate funding when lawmakers return to Washington after a seven-week break that begins at the end of this week and ends after Labor Day. Yet there is no good reason for Congress to put off a vote on funding, given the urgency of the problem.

Quoting again, the editorial ends with a further funding caution:

Many lawmakers, especially those who are up for reelection, clearly want to show voters they are doing something about opioids. This bill amounts to progress, but it will not change the trajectory of this epidemic.

That says it all.

Without real funding, this legislation is far from adequate. If we want to stop the increasing number of opioid overdoses, then we need to get serious about finding a way to do it. One way is funding our Nation's response to this scourge.

So I repeat, it is no wonder that there will be a change in the majority of this body with what went on, as evidenced by this morning's statement by my friend the Republican leader. To talk about a tortured explanation on Zika, the Zika problem we have in America today is significant. Last night, 39 new cases were reported in 1 day in America.

These mosquitoes are ravaging—basically two breeds of mosquitoes are causing these problems. They are vicious. They are awful. Mosquitoes have been bad for generations, making people sick and causing people to die, but this is new. Never in the history of all the problems mosquitoes have caused have they caused birth defects. But they do now, and they do it big-time. The President is aware of the issue. He is aware of the issue. It is a very, very frightening thing for our country.

In May, the Senate passed a bipartisan compromise to address this crisis. The bill wasn't perfect. The legislation called for \$1.1 billion in funding and was well short of the \$1.9 billion health experts said was needed to address the crisis, but it was OK. It was certainly a step forward, and 89 Senators—Democrats and Republicans—agreed it was a good step forward. The Senate compromise at the very least was a step in the right direction. That is why, in spite of our serious reservations about the lack of adequate funding, we voted for this legislation, and I am glad we

did. The overwhelming majority of Republicans voted for this bill, and I am glad they did. The Zika compromise passed, as I said, with 89 votes. Only the most extreme, conservative Members of this body voted against it. That was 2 months ago. But since then, it has become increasingly clear in the last 2 months that Republicans are not serious. They are playing games again because they are not responding to the threat posed by these mosquitoes and by this horrible, horrible condition that they are causing for human beings.

Instead of working to send the bill to the President's desk, the Republicans derailed the bipartisan response—89 Senators who voted—to send that to the House of Representatives. There was a conference. The Republicans chose a very reckless approach. They ignored what went on here in the Senate, even as more and more Americans are getting infected every day. There are almost 4,000 people in the United States and territories that have Zika right now. At least 600 pregnant women have shown evidence of infection. We don't know how many of those pregnant women who have this infection—this virus—are going to bear very, very sick babies. We don't know how many, but it is going to be a lot.

We should be working to fight Zika. We should be working together. We should be providing public health experts with the tools they need to fight this virus. It is not being done, as the Republican leader says. In the Senate, we are stuck in limbo as the Republican leader forces an unnecessary revote on this failed proposal we got from the House of Representatives and approved by the Republicans in the Senate—this conference report. We don't need to vote on this again. It was already rejected. It will be rejected again. Why? For very good reasons.

It is an abomination of a conference report. It restricts funding for birth control provided by Planned Parenthood. My friend talked about pregnant women. If we want to talk about pregnant women, we ought to talk about women who don't want to get pregnant. Where do they go? The vast majority of women in America go to Planned Parenthood. Millions go. This legislation that the Republicans are trying to foist on the American people stops them from being able to do that. It restricts funding for birth control provided by Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood is a whipping boy for the Republicans.

This legislation also exempts pesticide spraying from the Clean Water Act. They had to get Planned Parenthood, and they had to do something to the environmental community. Here is what they are going to do to whack the environmental community: We will just not have the Clean Water Act apply.

Veterans—my friend the Republican leader talks about veterans funding. Understand that the legislation being

proposed to help fight Zika takes \$500 million—one-half billion dollars—from the veterans program. That money was to be used for processing claims for veterans, which are way behind. We need that extra money. That is going to be gone.

The so-called salvation of the Zika problem also rescinds \$543 million from ObamaCare. Right now, I could raise a point of order, and that would go. That would be gone. It rescinds \$543 million from ObamaCare. They have to do this.

They are so ideological: Let's go after Planned Parenthood; let's go after the environmental community; let's make sure we do something about ObamaCare; and, just for good measure, because Ebola is not an emergency this very second, let's take more money from that. Two years ago, Ebola was a big emergency, and it will be again. And, just for good measure, to satisfy the right-wing—as Speaker Boehner called them—crazies over there, they said: We will strike a provision on the Confederate flag that was in the House bill.

How is that for an effort to do something constructive? We all know the Senate will not pass this Republican conference report. President Obama will not sign it into law. So why waste more time on this? We should pass the bipartisan Senate compromise as soon as possible. My friend said: Well, we can't amend the conference report. Of course, we can do anything here. With unanimous consent, we can do all kinds of good things.

That is obviously the responsible path forward, and we need to get this legislation to the President's desk. In order to do that, we must bring the Zika compromise legislation before the Senate as a stand-alone. I tried yesterday to do that. I asked unanimous consent that the Senate move to the compromise legislation and the Senate vote on that passage. But despite his previous support for this bipartisan legislation, the Republican leader objected. Senate Democrats are not going to be deterred.

Is there a State in the Union that is going to suffer more than Florida? No. So the senior Senator from Florida is going to come to the floor in a little while this morning, and he is going to ask consent that the Senate proceed to the Zika compromise as a stand-alone bill. It can be done. We should do that. Florida has been hit really hard, and the worst is yet to come. Yesterday alone, as I indicated, there were new cases reported. According to the Palm Beach Post, that brings the number of Floridians—just Floridians—affected with Zika today to almost 300, including 43 pregnant women. So I hope they are going to consider the request by Senator NELSON. We are willing to work with Republicans to get this done. The Senate is going to adjourn for the long, 7-week vacation once we get this done.

Our country is facing an emergency. It is time for the Republicans to start

treating it as such. "Opioids," "Zika" are only words from the Republicans. I repeat for the third time this morning, it is so clear why the Republicans are going to lose the majority in the U.S. Senate. All you have to do is listen to what the Republican leader had to say today.

Will the Chair announce the business of the Senate this morning.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY ACT OF 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany S. 524, which the clerk will report.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

Conference report to accompany S. 524, a bill to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12:30 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Illinois.

ZIKA VIRUS FUNDING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 5 months—5 months—that is how long it has been since the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention formally asked the U.S. Congress to respond to a public health emergency to combat the Zika virus—5 months.

In that time, we have seen the number of Americans infected with Zika soar to 3,667. Of those, 599 are pregnant women. In Illinois, there are 26 confirmed cases of Zika—5 months. To date, seven infants have been born with Zika-related birth defects in the United States. Five pregnancies have ended because of Zika-related birth defects—5 months. Last week, Utah health officials announced the first U.S. death related to the Zika virus—5 months. In Puerto Rico, where this situation gets worse by the day, officials reported a 1-week jump of 40 percent in the number of pregnant women on the island diagnosed with Zika—5 months. Three thousand, six hundred sixty-seven Americans to date are infected with Zika that we know of, 599 pregnant women, 7 babies born with severe birth defects, 5 ended because of the virus, and the first Zika-related death—5 months since the President of the United States said this was a public health crisis.

The Republican-controlled Congress has waited 5 months to respond to this crisis, and now we are on the verge of leaving town for 7 more weeks—until