Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 23, 2016

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232 The US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
H-204 The US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Democratic Leader
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan, Democratic Leader Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader McConnell, and Senate Democratic Leader Reid:

We write today requesting an urgent funding response to the growing public health emergency facing Florida and our local communities due to the continued spread of Zika.

To date, health officials have identified roughly 500 travel-related infections of the Zika virus in the State of Florida. Alarmingly, at least 69 of these cases have been found infecting pregnant women. Additionally, there have been over 40 confirmed cases of non-travel related transmission of the Zika virus in our state.

In fact, we received confirmation today that the first non-travel related transmission of the Zika virus has occurred in the Tampa Bay Region of Florida. This is the first confirmed non-travel related case outside of the Miami area.

It is time to put politics aside and work together to provide the funding and resources critical for state and local governments to combat this growing threat.

On June 23, 2016, we supported and helped pass $1.1 billion in funding to fight Zika and prevent it from spreading in Florida and throughout the United States. Unfortunately, the Senate ultimately rejected this funding.

Furthermore, on August 3, 2016, we requested the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reconsider the current allocation formula for Zika-specific funds being distributed amongst the U.S. and its territories. Florida has received only 4.5 percent available funding despite the fact the majority of all confirmed, non-travel related transmissions of the disease in the continental United States have been linked to mosquito transmission in Florida.

The health and well-being of Floridians, and all Americans, are at risk. We must work together in a bipartisan manner to protect the citizens of our state who need our help and who need additional federal funding to combat this dangerous disease.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

We call on Congress to immediately provide the additional federal funding and resources needed to address this growing public health emergency in our state and across this great nation. We must also provide states and localities with flexibility to combat this growing health threat.

Again, it is time to put politics aside. We urge House and Senate Leadership to pass a funding package through both chambers, which provides the critical resources necessary to combat this growing risk.

Dennis A. Ross
Member of Congress

David Jolly
Member of Congress

Gus Bilirakis
Member of Congress