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

July 14, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Your Administration has asked Congress to provide additional resources to prepare for, and prevent, the spread of the Zika virus. We have responded by both supporting the reprioritization of existing resources and passing through our respective chambers legislation that would provide additional Zika response funding.

On February 18, 2016, we called upon your Administration to repurpose available funds to be spent immediately to fight the disease. On April 6, 2016, you did so through the use of existing authorities, repurposing $589 million for Zika response activities. Given the urgency of your request, we were surprised last week when *Politico* reported the following based on information shared by Administration officials: "The Obama administration has so far distributed only about one-sixth of the unspent Ebola funding that it diverted to combat the Zika virus." This money is available *immediately* to prepare for and combat Zika, yet is seemingly not being spent.

The House passed a conference report that would provide an additional $1.1 billion in emergency supplemental funding to continue to prepare for, and prevent, Zika both domestically and internationally. It is unfortunate that Democrats have blocked action on this legislation in the Senate. The conference report provides the same amount of funding that every Senate Democrat previously supported. It fully funds vaccine research, and increases funding for mosquito spraying and eradication, Zika surveillance, and advanced development of treatments and diagnostics. The conference agreement provides the same access to health services as your supplemental request, contains no new prohibition on any health service, and expands access to health services in Puerto Rico beyond your initial request.

If Senate Democrats continue to block consideration of Zika legislation, we urge you to aggressively use funds already available to mount a strong defense against the virus. We also note that the fiscal year 2016 appropriations bills allow the Administration access to additional funds. The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services has transfer authority that can be used

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as an additional source for Zika preparedness. The previous Secretary did not hesitate to use this authority to support the failing Affordable Care Act Exchanges. The Secretary of State also has authority to reprogram funding to provide additional foreign assistance to address the Zika virus outside the United States.

We urge you to use available funding now to ensure that our nation is prepared.

Sincerely,

Harold Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee

Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee

Tom Cole
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Roy Blunt
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Kay Granger
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs