

Senator from Florida, there are other issues. One, they ask for a government-wide contingency fund that Health and Human Services controls and can transfer funds elsewhere. So what they want to do is play a shell game with this money. They want to get the money, and if they do not need it to deal with Zika, they can transfer it for other purposes—again, without any transparency or any real political accountability.

I think responsible Members of the Senate—and I would expect all 100 of us would put ourselves in that category—would want to know where the transparency is, where the accountability is, where the plan is, so we can sit down and do this as mature adults in a non-partisan way in order to solve the problem.

Here is another thing that sort of jumps out at me: When I look at the President's request for \$1.9 billion, they actually talk about funding matters unrelated to Zika. They talk about funding things at the Environmental Protection Agency. And looking at the request to transfer funds government-wide, basically they are requesting money, it appears—unless there is some logical explanation as to why we should, which they have not yet made—on an emergency basis, to grant funds to the Environmental Protection Agency. That is a little hard to understand.

Finally, there is this: All of us are willing to deal with this in a responsible, nonpartisan way. That is the reason I have spent time at the Galveston National Laboratory and the Texas Medical Center trying to learn as much as I can about this, so I can do my job, just as I am sure every individual Senator wants to do their job in a responsible way. But to come in and ask for \$1.9 billion in emergency funding, which means it is not paid for—it is borrowed money, which adds to the deficit and the debt—is a pretty serious matter, especially when our national debt is \$19 trillion and has almost doubled under the Obama administration.

This is a very serious matter, and I treat it seriously, and I trust all 100 Senators believe this is something we ought to deal with responsibly and in a deliberate sort of way, and we will. But it is not by coming to the floor and grandstanding by asking for \$1.9 billion blank checks without any plan to spend it in an appropriate sort of way.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Washington.

ZIKA VIRUS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, there are already nearly 900 cases of the Zika virus in the United States and its 3 territories, including actually 2 confirmed cases in my home State of Washington. A recent survey showed that 40 percent of adults in our country see this virus as a reason to delay starting families. Those are disturbing statistics. They make it clear that the Zika virus is a public health emergency, and there is no good reason for the delay we are seeing from our Republican colleagues in addressing this.

Months ago, the administration put forward the strong proposal that Senator REID introduced today. Republicans refused at the time to even consider it, and I am disappointed again this morning that they weighed in on the side of further delay rather than acting on this. As a result, we are getting closer to the summer and to mosquito season, but we still here in this body have not moved on emergency supplemental funding that would put much needed resources into preventing and treating this frightening virus.

Too many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle still don't seem to see Zika as an emergency. Some Republicans are insisting we shouldn't give the administration a penny in additional funding to support the response we need to make. Others are saying that action on Zika can wait—wait for weeks or months. Republicans in Congress might be able to simply wait, but families across this country cannot.

Addressing this Zika virus shouldn't be controversial. With women's and children's health and well-being on the line, it certainly should not be a place for partisanship.

Democrats are at the table. We want to get this done as soon as possible. In fact, as recently as a few days ago I was hopeful Republicans were truly interested in working with us to get this done and to be able to find an actual path forward. We had some good conversations last week. But I am worried that in the last few days it has become clear once again that the extreme right, like the Heritage Foundation, is in control, and Republican leaders have been unable to demonstrate to this point a path on how we can get a bipartisan deal signed into law. This issue is far too important to have Republican infighting hold it up. So I urge my Republican colleagues to join us. We are ready to be at the table to work with them. We need to address this as an emergency.

Then I hope we can move on to work on the other really critical issues before us: the opioid epidemic that so many have been here to talk about; the families in Flint who are suffering; ensuring our Supreme Court nominee gets a fair consideration—a hearing, even. There is so much work to be done.

I am here to urge our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to recognize this is an emergency. It cannot wait. Families are waiting for us to act. We need to get the research. We need to have an understanding of what this disease is. We certainly need to put into place prevention, and we certainly need to work on the important path forward in making sure we have the right kinds of education out there as well as a solution to this problem that is rapidly becoming an American problem.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, if this isn't an emergency, then I don't know what is. Zika is a public health emergency. It defines a public health emergency, and we really have to act now to fund the administration's full \$1.9 billion supplemental funding request.

I want to respond to the assistant majority leader's concerns that there is no plan. With due respect—and I know he is working hard on this as well—that is just not accurate. The legislation propounded by Senators NELSON and others has a very specific plan. I was fortunate enough to visit the headquarters for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. They have a very specific plan. It is vector controlled. It is developing the diagnostic tests necessary to figure out whether or not people are carriers of the Zika virus. It is working on a vaccine. They have a high degree of confidence that they are eventually going to get a vaccine. But this takes time, and this takes resources. It is public health outreach regarding mosquitos and how this is transmitted, and it is assurance regarding the safety of our blood supply. So they have a plan.

Let me be a little more specific: \$743 million for CDC—this money would include grants and technical assistance to Puerto Rico and the U.S. territories and help our domestic and international response activities; about \$250 million for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, or CMS, to increase the Federal match rate to Puerto Rico where there have been 500 active transmission cases—and, unfortunately, that number continues to go up; several hundred million dollars for the National Institutes of Health and BARDA to invest in vaccine research and development. That is the end game, but in the meantime, we have to prevent the transmission as our country warms up and as the mosquitos become more prevalent across the country with \$10 million to the FDA for a vaccine and diagnostics development review and \$335 million to USAID's efforts abroad to support affected countries' public health efforts on mosquito-borne diseases.

I will make a couple of specific procedural points. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I believe it is really important that we are trying to move in the regular order on each individual Appropriations subcommittee.

We have been working on a bipartisan basis. So we are trying to move in the regular order, and that is good news. We are moving a little more quickly than I think has been done in many years. That is good news. But the practical fact of that also means that we are not in the middle of working on legislation that must be passed by today or must be passed by next week because whatever we do—whether it is the Energy and Water title, whether it is THUD coming next, maybe MILCON-VA after, whatever it may be—we are going to be waiting for the House to act, and we are going to be conferring. It is not at all clear when we will actually move appropriations measures to the President's desk, but it is fair to say those things are not exactly legislatively on fire. We could wait 2 or 3 legislative days. We could wait 2 or 3 legislative weeks. We are ahead of the game. That is not to say we don't have our own challenges with each of these individual appropriations measures, but this defines an emergency. This defines an emergency. This is an actual public health emergency, which means the idea of a pay-for for this is antithetical to the way we ought to work. This is what government does.

Whatever your political persuasion, whatever your ideology is about the size and scope of the Federal Government, I think we can all agree that the most basic responsibility of the Federal Government is to keep us all safe. This is a real risk. This is not an imaginary risk, this is not a trumped-up risk, and this is not a partisan thing. If you talk to the CDC, if you talk to your local departments of health, vector controls, mosquito control areas—talk to them. They are very nervous, and it is increasing. The only reason this hasn't totally popped both epidemiologically and politically is that it is still cold in a lot of places and mosquitos aren't out. This is a real emergency. There is no reason we shouldn't be taking this up as the emergency starts to happen. There is no reason we can't take a couple legislative days to deal with that.

To address the senior Senator from Texas, the assistant majority leader's questions about whether the plan addresses his concerns about accountability, about the ability to move money from one account to the other, about backfilling the Ebola funding—fine. Those are all legitimate questions, and I think they can all be addressed.

But here is my question: Why not get on the bill? Why object to a UC request that we get on the bill? All of those questions can be addressed on the floor or in committee or in conversation. There are many ways to address those questions. But the refusal to even acknowledge that this matter is sufficiently urgent that it should be the thing we are dealing with right now, that THUD could wait a week, and that whatever we are planning to do next is

not quite as urgent as the Zika virus—that is the point we are making today. Not that there isn't going to be some legislative wrangling and not that we are supposing that the President's request is exactly perfect, it is just that this is a real emergency, and we ought to get this thing onto the floor so we can take some action. That is what we have to do.

I know the Senator from Missouri is working very hard on this. I know others are too. We don't want this to be a partisan issue either. But to object to a request to get on this bill fails to acknowledge what a serious public health emergency the Zika virus is.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I came to the floor today to talk about another issue, and I will talk about the issue I had scheduled to talk about earlier this week. But in regard to the issue of Zika, it does need to be dealt with. It is being dealt with.

The good news is that there was substantial money various departments had that could be reprogrammed, and the fact that they have reprogrammed it indicates to me that there is a genuine belief in the administration, which I share, that this is an emergency. Over half a billion dollars has already been reprogrammed to deal with that emergency. I believe some of that reprogramming money needs to be restored, and some of it probably doesn't. The Ebola crisis is not what we thought it might be in Africa, but it is still in existence there. I think some of that money needs to go back into the accounts it had been reprogrammed out of.

But if anybody listening to this debate believes that nothing is happening, that is not accurate. I do appreciate my friend from Florida recognizing that a lot of discussions are going on. I was in several this week, and some yesterday with House Members and Senate Members.

The House could pass a bill first. That may or may not happen, but what really needs to happen is a bill that gets on the President's desk. I think there is almost no chance the Senate would pass a \$1.9 billion bill as proposed. The best place to debate that could be the Senate floor for several days or it could be to work on a bill that could come to the floor quickly, go to the House, and be passed by the House. If there were a slim chance that the Senate could pass the bill we have been talking about—the bill as proposed that would spend \$1.9 billion, in big hundred-million dollar chunks, which we talk about as if that is no money at all and is somehow a plan—that in all likelihood wouldn't pass the Senate, and I am absolutely sure it wouldn't pass the House. What would we have gained? This is something we need to work out. We can work it out. I believe we will work it out.

The goal is not for the Senate to pass a bill. The goal is for the Congress to

pass a bill and the President of the United States to sign that bill. I believe that will happen. Many people, including me, are working to see that happens. The majority leader knows that, and others who have spoken today reflect the fact that they know those discussions are going on.

FALLEN HEROES FLAG ACT

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, what I came to talk about today is a bill we did pass a couple of weeks ago. As we get ready for police week early in May—I think the week of the 9th of May—there are people we want to recognize and do recognize and do appreciate. I am cochair, along with Senator COONS of Delaware, of the Law Enforcement Caucus. I want to speak today about something we have just done to honor our first responders.

I want to start by recognizing the first responders from my State of Missouri who lost their lives in the line of duty last year. In Missouri, four law enforcement officers died in the line of duty. Deputy Sheriff Steven Brett Hawkins of the Harrison County Sheriff's Office, Trooper James Matthew Bava of the Missouri State Highway Patrol, Sergeant Peggy Marie Vassallo of the Bellefontaine Neighbors Police Department, and Officer Ronald Eugene Strittmatter of the Lakeshire Police Department lost their lives.

Deputy Sheriff Brett Hawkins of Bethany, MO, suffered a fatal heart attack on September 13 following an emergency response. He was 34 years old. Deputy Sheriff Hawkins suffered that attack after returning home from his shift, which included the search of a residence and surrounding property. He had served with the Harrison County Sheriff's Office for 3 years. He is survived by his wife, daughter, and three sons.

Trooper James Bava of Mexico, MO, was involved in a fatal vehicle crash while pursuing a motorcyclist for a traffic stop on August 28. Trooper Bava had served with the Missouri State Highway Patrol for 2 years. He was 25 years old the day he lost his life serving us. He is survived by his parents, a brother, three sisters, and his fiancée.

Sergeant Peggy Vassallo of Bellefontaine Neighbors Police Department was struck and killed by a vehicle on August 24 while rendering aid to another driver after being involved in an accident en route to work. Sergeant Vassallo had served with the Bellefontaine Neighbors Police Department for 15 years and had previously served with the St. Louis County Police Department for over 13 years, almost 30 years' service. She is survived by her husband, son, and two grandchildren.

Officer Ronald Strittmatter suffered a heart attack after attempting to help an older person who had fallen. Officer Strittmatter had served in the Lakeshire Police Department for 4 years and had previously served in the