



# The Senate of The State of Texas

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June 6, 2016

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W  
Washington, Washington DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

The Texas Senate Health and Human Services Committee recently convened to review the state's preparation and response to the Zika virus. Specifically, the Committee examined the incidence of the disease in Texas, surveillance efforts, modes of transmission, strategies to prevent transmission, and a review of local mosquito control programs across Texas counties.

Testimony received at the hearing from the Texas Department of State Health Services, state Zika experts, and local health departments painted a grim picture of the potentially devastating effects this disease may have on Texas communities, particularly on pregnant women and their unborn children. Texas has 40 confirmed travel-related cases of Zika virus and it is only a matter of time before Zika is locally transmitted by mosquitoes.

Texas has proactively developed a state Zika Plan and continues to work with local health departments to mitigate the spread of Zika. But in order to effectively combat the spread of the Zika virus, there should be a coordinated federal, state and local response, including a comprehensive communications plan to inform the public and the health care community about this devastating disease, enhanced surveillance and laboratory capacity, and coordinated identification and notification efforts for those who are infected.

Implementation of the state's response is hampered by the uncertainty of federal funding. The state's Public Health Emergency Preparedness federal funding was recently cut by \$3.6 million, which is coupled with the uncertainty of receiving any federal funds for Zika in a timely manner, further exacerbating the state's challenge in responding to this potential public health disaster. Mosquito season is already upon us, and sending federal funds to the states at the end of summer is too late. States and local health departments need the assistance now.

The Honorable Barack Obama

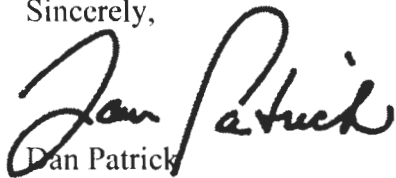
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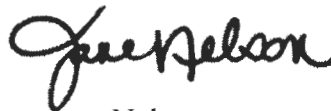
As the weather continues to warm in Texas, and flooding persists in many areas of the state, Texas continues to remain at greater risk of sustained local transmission of Zika than most of the rest of the country. We urge you to help ensure a coordinated and robust response by the federal government to combat the spread of the Zika virus, and the timely receipt of federal funds to mitigate this devastating public health threat.

If we may do anything to assist you in the expeditious delivery of needed aid, please let us know.

Sincerely,



Dan Patrick  
Lieutenant Governor



Jane Nelson  
Chairman, Texas Senate  
Finance Committee



Charles Schwertner  
Chairman, Texas Senate  
Health & Human Services Committee

CC: Senator John Cornyn  
Senator Ted Cruz  
Representative Louie Gohmert  
Representative Ted Poe  
Representative Sam Johnson  
Representative John Ratcliffe  
Representative Jeb Hensarling  
Representative Joe Barton  
Representative John Abney Culberson  
Representative Kevin Brady  
Representative Al Green  
Representative Michael T. McCaul  
Representative K. Michael Conaway  
Representative Kay Granger  
Representative Mac Thornberry  
Representative Randy K. Weber  
Representative Rubén Hinojosa  
Representative Beto O'Rourke  
Governor Greg Abbott

Representative Bill Flores  
Representative Sheila Jackson Lee  
Representative Randy Neugebauer  
Representative Joaquin Castro  
Representative Lamar Smith  
Representative Pete Olson  
Representative Will Hurd  
Representative Kenny Marchant  
Representative Roger Williams  
Representative Michael C. Burgess  
Representative Blake Farenthold  
Representative Henry Cuellar  
Representative Gene Green  
Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Representative John R. Carter  
Representative Pete Sessions  
Representative Filemon Vela  
Representative Lloyd Doggett  
Speaker Joe Straus