

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

March 18, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232, United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Our nation is facing public health emergencies that require swift and decisive action.

Unless Congress approves emergency resources, the spread of the Zika virus, the accelerating tragedy of opioid addiction, and the Flint water crisis each threaten to do irreversible damage to the lives of thousands of Americans.

The rapid emergence of the Zika virus represents a significant danger to expectant mothers in many parts of the United States. Our fellow Americans in Puerto Rico are already on the front lines of this widening epidemic. We need a robust, proactive U.S. response to protect American communities and combat the Zika virus across our hemisphere – and we cannot cannibalize the funds needed to continue the effort to develop an Ebola vaccine and prevent an Ebola pandemic. We should provide the funds to meet the President’s emergency request for \$1.9 billion to fight Zika.

Opioid addiction is inflicting a savage daily toll in neighborhoods across America. Opioids are hollowing out our communities and claiming the lives of tens of thousands of Americans every year. We must now respond to this national emergency with the seriousness and urgency it requires, with emergency action to increase funding for addiction treatment programs and other tools. We should approve the President’s request for \$600 million to address the opioid epidemic.

In Flint, thousands of children are at risk of lifelong consequences from their exposure to lead-contaminated water. The negative effects of their lead exposure may be overcome, but we must act now to replace Flint’s lead-contaminated water infrastructure and to ensure these children receive the attention, nutrition, and educational support they will need to thrive. Flint’s Congressman Dan Kildee has outlined a \$765 million emergency need.


Therefore, we are strongly urging you to work with Democrats to craft and advance an emergency supplemental appropriations bill to address these serious public health crises facing America. We should also act immediately to fill the Public Health Emergency Fund that gives health officials the strategic resources to decisively confront current and future public health crises as they emerge.

The House must not adjourn before we take action to address these emergencies threatening the lives and the futures of so many American families.


Thank you for your attention and consideration of this request.


Sincerely,


NANCY PELOSI
Democratic Leader


STENY H. HOYER
Democratic Whip



JAMES E. CLYBURN
Assistant Democratic Leader


XAVIER BECERRA
Democratic Caucus Chairman



JOSEPH CROWLEY
Vice Chairman, Democratic Caucus


BEN RAY LUJAN
Member, Democratic Leadership


STEVE ISRAEL
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Co-Chair, Steering and Policy Committee


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Co-Chair, Steering and Policy Committee


CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
Ranking Member, House Budget Committee