



John Bocchieri
State Representative, House District 59

July 29, 2016

Governor John Kasich

77 South High Street, 30th Floor

Columbus Ohio, 43215

Dear Gov. Kasich,

I write to respectfully request a unified response to the Zika virus epidemic that has plagued the country, with over 1,600 cases reported in the continental United States and Hawaii.¹ As you may know, I am an Air Force Reserve pilot and Squadron Commander of the only military large-area spray unit on the planet and we have responded to outbreak from West Nile virus, Dengue fever and other mosquito-borne diseases. I am intimately aware of the challenges and hoops that local communities must jump through to conduct large aerial spray missions. My family has been personally affected by mosquito-borne illnesses; therefore, I am requesting that the state set aside \$50 million from the Budget Stabilization Fund (BSF)—which comfortably rests at over \$2 billion—to create a Disaster Preparedness Contingency Fund exclusively for mosquito borne diseases.

In Puerto Rico, as many as 50 pregnant women a day are becoming infected with the virus², and in the continental U.S. and Hawaii at least 13 infants have been born with Zika-related birth defects, with six pregnancy losses reported.³ Florida Gov. Rick Scott recently announced that the state will begin increasing spraying efforts after the state found that local mosquitos are transmitting the disease. With 26 case of Zika already reported in Ohio and West Nile virus still posing a threat, we cannot ignore how quickly mosquito-borne disease can spread and harm our citizens.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention released a response plan to prepare, prevent and respond to Zika Virus and stand in support of state and local efforts to prepare and respond to the debilitating virus.⁴ After reviewing Ohio's funding sources for emergency disaster services under House Bills 64 and 390, there appears to be many obstacles for local communities to have access to immediate funds to combat an out outbreak. With the establishment of a Disaster Preparedness Contingency Fund, communities can work closely with local officials to have funds available at their fingertips exclusively for mosquito-borne diseases.

With these funds readily available, local communities can quickly respond and take action:

- Prepare: Have emergency testing available and develop local mosquito control plans.
- Prevent: Have active mosquito spraying.

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/united-states.html>

² <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/u-s-urges-puerto-rico-spray-zika-more-pregnant-women-n605186>

³ <http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/29/health/florida-health-officials-confirm-local-zika-transmission/index.html>

⁴ <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/pdfs/zika-draft-interim-conus-plan.pdf>

- Respond: In the case of an outbreak, have the needed medication available and educate the citizens quickly.

It is in the best interest of the health and safety of the general public that we take action before it becomes a public health crisis. I am hopeful that you will make the decision to put the citizens of Ohio first and set aside the funding to keep our children and families safe.

Thank you for your consideration of this serious matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bocchieri". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J".

John Bocchieri
State Representative

