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**BLUE RIBBON STUDY PANEL APPLAUDS APPROVAL OF ZIKA FUNDING;
CALLS FOR SHIFT IN HOW U.S. BUDGETS FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASE CRISES**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Sept. 29, 2016) – The co-chairs of the Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense today applauded action by the United States Congress to reach a compromise on Zika funding, but also reasserted its desire to seek a total shift in how the U.S. budgets for infectious disease crises moving forward.

“The compromise hammered out in Congress this week is at a reasonable funding level, and it is our hope that it will be used to put in place both prevention and response measures that will minimize local transmission of the Zika virus in the United States,” said Panel Co-Chair Sen. Joseph Lieberman. “However, the members of the Blue Ribbon Study Panel remain concerned that we continue to operate on a slow, reactionary basis for quickly moving public health threats.”

“We’ve seen this before with the Ebola outbreak,” added Co-Chair Gov. Tom Ridge. “As is articulated in our National Blueprint report, we need a total shift in how we budget for infectious diseases crises, one that incorporates smart advance budgeting and a much greater focus on prevention and preparedness. Only then will we be prepared as a nation to deal with such threats.”

The Panel recognizes the work of the appropriations committees and congressional leadership in reaching this important consensus, and looks forward to working with them on future funding approaches.

About the Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense

The [Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense](#) released its report, *A National Blueprint for Biodefense: Leadership and Major Reform Needed to Optimize Efforts*, in October 2015. The report identifies capability gaps and recommends changes to U.S. policy and law to strengthen national biodefense while optimizing resource investments. The panel is co-chaired by former Sen. Joe Lieberman and former Gov. Tom Ridge, who are joined by former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, former Sen. Tom Daschle, former Rep. Jim Greenwood, and the Hon. Kenneth Wainstein. [Hudson Institute](#), the [Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies](#), and the [Potomac Institute for Policy Studies](#) are the Panel’s institutional sponsors.