

# Congressmen Back Sen. Lyme Language

The national non-profit Lyme Disease Association (LDA) is pleased to announce that a letter led by Congressman Bill Shuster (R-PA) along with 23 other members of Congress was sent to the Senate HELP Committee Chair, Senator Lamar Alexander, and Ranking Member, Patty Murray, requesting their support for Lyme disease provisions found in the 21st Century Cures Act (HR 6), which passed the House of Representatives on July 10 and is now awaiting action in the Senate HELP Committee. The Senate is considering a similar bill to HR 6, and the Lyme Community wants to ensure that the Lyme language is included in the Senate version.

[Click here to read Congressional Letter to Senate](#)

[Click here for Congressman Shuster's Press Release](#)

The Office of Congressman Bill Shuster (PA-9) contacted the LDA to ask how he could support the Lyme disease effort in Congress. A letter was decided upon and was initiated by him with the LDA sending its support of the letter. Besides Representative Shuster, House Lyme Caucus co-chairs Chris Smith (NJ-4) and Collin C. Peterson (MN-7) and Chris Gibson (NY-19) were some of the signers.

The language contained in HR 6 forms an interagency working group which includes patient and treating physician representation and which would provide their much needed voice in helping to shape a federal Lyme disease agenda. This language was shaped by the patient community and was included in the Gibson bill which passed the House in 2014.

Pat Smith, LDA President said, "The Lyme Community has worked hard to develop and pass in the House language which will finally give patients a voice. We need the Senate to support Lyme patients by supporting that language. Patient numbers are growing across the US, and we know that more than 300,000 new cases occur annually. These patients need a voice in the process, and we thank Congressman Shuster for stepping up and offering his help and leadership in the fight."

"Lyme disease continues to have a profound impact on the lives of thousands of Pennsylvanians and we must speak up and work for each one of them fighting this

tragic illness,” said Congressman Bill Shuster. “I helped pass the Cures Act earlier this year because of the steps it takes in creating more accurate diagnostic tools and treatment for Lyme patients, and I urge the Senate to join the House in doing everything we can to combat this devastating disease.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) final case reports for 2014, Pennsylvania now ranks # 1 in the US in Lyme case numbers, with 7,487 cases. The CDC has indicated cases are underreported by a factor of 10, thus 74,870 new cases occurred in the State in 2014. Mr. Schuster’s district spans all or parts of 12 counties from Fayette County near Pittsburgh to the Susquehanna River in Harrisburg and from the Maryland border North to Clearfield County. State health officials said in 2015 for the first time they have confirmed Lyme in every county in Pennsylvania.