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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

May 12, 2015

*Excerpts of Remarks by Rep. Chris Smith*

**Pat Smith: Courage in Advocacy**

SENIOR MEMBER, FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
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GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE

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CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND  
COOPERATION IN EUROPE

CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL EXECUTIVE  
COMMISSION ON CHINA

DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

There is no one more deserving of Lyme Connection's first-ever Courage in Advocacy Award than Pat Smith, founder and President of the Lyme Disease Association (LDA). During my tenure in Congress, I have met few advocates who can match Pat's combination of courage, tenacity, knowledge, skill, and compassion when advocating for patients with Lyme. Pat's decades of work in educating policymakers and the public have been instrumental in the fight for fair treatment of Lyme disease patients.

I began working on Lyme disease after Pat—a constituent of NJ's 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District—first approached me after a town hall meeting in 1992. She asked me to get involved with Lyme disease, and we hit the ground running. That year, we met with the two top medical officials at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to express our concerns over the spread of tick-borne diseases in our state. We raised questions regarding the apparent ineffectiveness of a month long antibiotic treatment for a sizable portion of Lyme disease patients—those suffering from chronic Lyme, which the CDC then and still today, refuses to recognize. Twenty-three years later, some progress has been made but much, much more must be done. The courageous advocacy exemplified by Pat has never been more challenging and more necessary.

Lyme and other tick-borne diseases have been devastating to our neighbors and communities. Our home state of New Jersey has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest prevalence rate in the country. Nation-wide, an estimated 300,000 persons suffer from Lyme each year—not 30,000 as the CDC has previously insisted and might still if it were not for Pat's dogged work and research in collaboration with others. LDA, with Pat at the helm, has served as a watchdog and whistleblower for the greater Lyme community.

Co-Chairman of the following Congressional Member Organizations: Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease • Bi-Partisan Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism  
Lyme Disease Caucus • Coalition for Autism Research and Education • Bi-Partisan Congressional Pro-Life Caucus • Bosnia Caucus • Poland Caucus  
Ad Hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs • Congressional Caucus on Human Trafficking • Vietnam Caucus • Congressional Heart and Stroke Coalition



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Pat is known as one of the top experts on chronic Lyme and is sought after for her expertise. She has been invited to speak about vector-borne diseases at numerous federal agencies, including CDC and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). She testified before Congress at a hearing I chaired before the Global Health and Human Rights Subcommittee, and has also testified before the House Energy and Commerce Committee about Lyme-related bills.

I have personally had the pleasure of working with Pat on policy and legislative efforts to advance research into Lyme disease, provide more accurate diagnostic tools and treatment options for those impacted, and raise the quality of life for individuals with tick-borne disease. On September 28, 1993 I offered an amendment to establish a Lyme Disease Program at the U.S. Department of the Army — which passed and became law with Pat's help. On May 5, 1998 I introduced a comprehensive, bipartisan Lyme disease bill—H.R. 3795, the Lyme Disease Initiative Act of 1998—which would have established an advisory committee to comprehensively investigate Lyme. In subsequent Congresses I have reintroduced this bill, all with the support and collaboration of LDA.

This year I've re-introduced the bill as HR 665, legislation which establishes a federal Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee to better deliver results for those living with these illnesses. To accomplish this goal we take the politics out and put the experts in. The Committee will ensure that experts like Pat, and patients such as those served by LDA and Lyme Connection, have a seat at the table when decisions are made that affect the health of the Lyme community.

These are just a few of the endeavors that Pat and I have worked on and the list is long and continuing. In sum, our work on Lyme at the federal level would not be possible without Pat's continuing efforts.

While this award is a great honor, there is not enough that I or the Lyme community can do to acknowledge Pat for her tireless commitment to this cause. She has spent decades defending the rights of Lyme patients: to be given helpful and accurate information, to be treated by Lyme-literate physicians, and above all to have enhanced options in dealing with this debilitating disease.

May 12, 2015, Comments from Congressman Christopher Smith (NJ).