

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 26, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Senate HELP Committee
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate HELP Committee
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

We write today to urge you to support the Lyme disease provisions included in the *21st Century Cures Act*, which passed the House of Representatives on July 10th.

As part of its effort to spur biomedical innovation and advance care for patients, *21st Century Cures* includes several provisions intended to improve the current methods used to research and treat Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases (TBD).

Recent studies conducted by the Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) estimate that while 30,000 new Lyme disease diagnoses are reported to the CDC annually, the number of people diagnosed with Lyme disease each year in the United States is actually closer to 300,000. As this contingent of patients and families afflicted by Lyme disease can attest, the debilitating effects of the disease, even after treatment, can be life-long.

H.R. 6 contains a number of proactive measures to address the needs of Lyme patients. Specifically, the Lyme disease language establishes an interagency working group, including patients and physicians, to help inform, guide, and monitor federal activity on Lyme. The Interagency Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Working Group established by the *21st Century Cures Act* will ensure that experts and patients are included in decisions that affect the Lyme community. H.R. 6 also requires the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to support advanced research on Lyme and submit a biennial report that includes the actions and progress made by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in improving the outcomes of patients affected by the disease. We are confident these provisions will facilitate interagency cooperation and enhance accountability to more effectively combat this disease and improve outcomes for patients and their families.

As you work to craft and consider legislation similar to the *21st Century Cures Act*, we encourage you to adopt these provisions which are critically important in our goal to better understand, treat, and ultimately cure Lyme and other tick-borne diseases.


Sincerely,



Bill Shuster
Member of Congress



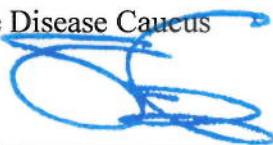
Chris Smith
Co-Chair
Lyme Disease Caucus



Collin C. Peterson
Co-Chair
Lyme Disease Caucus



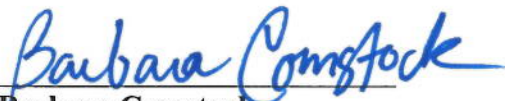
Richard Hanna
Member of Congress



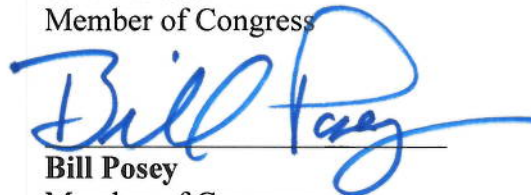
Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress



Chris Gibson
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Barbara Comstock
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Lynn Jenkins
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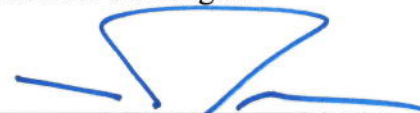
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Lou Barletta
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Mike Fitzpatrick
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Ryan Costello
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Rob Wittman
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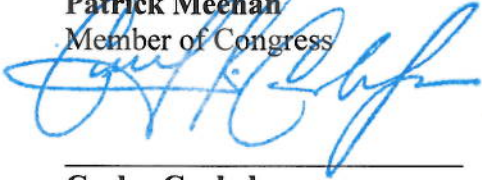
Chellie Pingree
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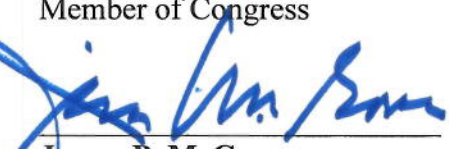
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