

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

MONMOUTH
112 Village Center Drive
Freehold, NJ 07728-2510
(732) 780-3035

OCEAN
405 Route 539
Plumsted, NJ 08514-2303
(732) 350-2300; (609) 286-2571

MERCER
4573 South Broad Street
Hamilton, NJ 08620-2215
(609) 585-7878



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

November 12, 2015

SENIOR MEMBER, FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN, AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH,
GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE

WESTERN HEMISPHERE
SUBCOMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE

CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA

DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

Dear Friends,

Please allow me to offer you my deep appreciation and wish you the best of success as you commence the Lyme Disease Association's 16th annual CME conference appropriately named: Lyme & Other Tick-Borne Diseases- Science Bridging the Gap.

As the co-chair of the Congressional Lyme Disease Caucus, I began working to promote federal support for Lyme research and treatment after Pat Smith—my constituent in NJ's 4th Congressional District—approached me following a town hall meeting in 1992. Pat tenaciously, and graciously, challenged me to learn and do more to alleviate the burdens of those with Lyme Disease and push federal agencies to advance Lyme diagnosis and treatment strategies.

Twenty-three years later, while much remains to be done, working together we have enjoyed some significant victories. A key highlight from this year alone, is House passage of the Department of Defense spending bill (HR 2685) which included, for the first time, a provision the LDA and I spearheaded to target a total of \$5 million in new federal funding for Lyme disease research through the US Department of Defense. When enacted, the funding in the DOD bill will go a long way to find better treatments for the men and women in our military who have contracted Lyme—and the advances in research and treatments made on behalf of our servicemembers will have substantive and beneficial applications for patients in the greater population.

This year I have also re-introduced HR 665, legislation which establishes a federal Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee to better deliver results for those living with these illnesses. As envisioned in my bill, the new Committee would be broad and truly representative ensuring that experts like those attending this conference, as well as the patients they serve, have a seat at the table when decisions are made that affect the health of the Lyme community.

More funding and greater representation for chronic Lyme patients are just two of the legislative proposals that LDA and the Congressional Lyme Disease Caucus have championed to help those with Lyme. And our list of beneficial initiatives continues to expand. In sum, our work on Lyme at the federal level would not be possible without the ongoing efforts of the Lyme Disease Association as well Lyme-literate physicians, experts and advocates like you. I thank you all for your time-tested spirit and dedication to stamping out this disease and for continuing to compassionately support Lyme patients.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

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