

Senate of Pennsylvania



HARRISBURG, PA

In the Senate, May 8, 2017

Whereas, Lyme disease is a bacterial infection transmitted primarily by ticks and is caused by the spirochete *Borrelia burgdorferi*; and

Whereas, Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases such as Babesiosis, Bartonellosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Ehrlichiosis and others pose a serious threat to the quality of life of many Pennsylvanians, with the frequency of diagnosed and reported Lyme disease cases increasing dramatically over the past several years; and

Whereas, The most recent 15-year surveillance study of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which was published in 2008, reveals continued emergence and geographic expansion of Lyme disease across the United States; and

Whereas, The CDC study reports a disproportionate increase among children and recommends a Public Health Action to call for an increase in targeted prevention strategies, tick avoidance, early disease recognition and early treatment interventions; and

Whereas, In August 2013, the CDC released a report stating that preliminary estimates indicate approximately 300,000 Americans are diagnosed with Lyme disease each year, and this amount is approximately 10 times higher than the number of cases previously reported to the CDC every year; and

Whereas, In the last six years, Pennsylvania ranked highest in the country in the number of confirmed cases of Lyme disease; and

Whereas, In 2016, Pennsylvania reported 12,200 cases, which translates to 122,000 new cases and approximately 40% of the nation's cases in Pennsylvania alone, and reflects another increase from 2015's 10,817 new cases (provisional data); and

Whereas, In 2015, a Department of Environmental Protection published study confirmed a high risk of Lyme disease in every county of this Commonwealth, as 67 counties had the blacklegged tick, verifying that every Pennsylvanian, from Philadelphia to Erie, must take precautions to prevent the spread of Lyme disease; and

Whereas, The most common way to acquire Lyme and related diseases is to be bitten by a tick that carries the spirochete; and

Whereas, This disease is not limited to age or ethnic boundaries; and