A RESOLUTION

Designating the month of May 2017 as "Lyme and Tick-borne Disease Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania.

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

WHEREAS, Lyme disease can cause early symptoms, including a rash or flu-like symptoms such as fever, muscle aches, headaches and fatigue, that can easily be misdiagnosed; and

WHEREAS, If not caught early, Lyme disease can lead to a chronic debilitating illness that is very difficult to
eradicate; and

WHEREAS, The prevention of Lyme disease and other tick-borne disorders is difficult; and

WHEREAS, Residents of this Commonwealth can greatly reduce their chance of tick pathogen transmission if they take proper caution while engaged in outdoor activities from early spring through late fall, as well as during a warmer winter season, and make frequent tick checks and remove and dispose of ticks promptly and properly; and

WHEREAS, Residents of this Commonwealth can greatly reduce the risk of Lyme disease on their properties through landscape, insecticide and other measures that have been found to be effective; and

WHEREAS, The schools of this Commonwealth can greatly reduce the risk of Lyme and related diseases among schoolchildren through prevention education and precautions, including instruction to parents regarding steps to take before and after school-related activities such as field trips and sports; and

WHEREAS, Residents of this Commonwealth should be aware of early, disseminated and late/persistent symptoms, and that a negative Lyme test cannot rule out Lyme disease; and

WHEREAS, The early clinical diagnosis and appropriate treatment of these tick-borne disorders and diseases can greatly reduce the risks of continued, diverse and chronic symptoms that can affect every system and organ of the human body and often every aspect of a person's life; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate designate the month of May 2017 as "Lyme and Tick-borne Disease Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania in a continued effort to benefit the overall health and quality of life of the residents of this Commonwealth by increasing their
1 awareness of the threat of tick bites and the potential
2 seriousness of Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases.