

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 38 Session of 2019

INTRODUCED BY BROWN, HILL-EVANS, HENNESSEY, READSHAW, PEIFER, BIZZARRO, JAMES, SCHLOSSBERG, SAPPEY, STURLA, CONKLIN, RYAN, CALTAGIRONE, SONNEY, KORTZ, PICKETT, BERNSTINE, LONGIETTI, BARRAR, KINSEY, EMRICK, SAINATO, MEHAFFIE, FREEMAN, WARNER, HELM, MACKENZIE, OBERLANDER, MILLARD, PYLE, B. MILLER, KAUFFMAN, SAYLOR, PASHINSKI, OWLETT, ZIMMERMAN, STAATS, IRVIN, DIGIROLAMO, MURT, KAUFER, NEILSON, M. K. KELLER, TOOHIL, QUINN, HAHN, HEFFLEY, CAUSER, RADER, FEE, T. DAVIS, DRISCOLL AND EVERETT, JANUARY 24, 2019

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35, JANUARY 24, 2019

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the month of May 2019 as "Lyme and Tick-borne
2 Disease Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Lyme disease is a bacterial infection transmitted
4 primarily by ticks and is caused by the spirochete *Borrelia*
5 *burgdorferi*; and

6 WHEREAS, Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases such as
7 babesiosis, bartonellosis, anaplasmosis, Rocky Mountain spotted
8 fever, ehrlichiosis and others pose a serious threat to the
9 health and quality of life of many Pennsylvanians; and

10 WHEREAS, The frequency of diagnosed and reported Lyme disease
11 cases has increased dramatically over the past several years and
12 the severity continues to increase, evidenced by multiple deaths
13 attributable to tick-borne diseases in youths and young adults
14 reported in 2017; and

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

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

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

14 WHEREAS, In the last six years, Pennsylvania ranked highest
15 in the country in the number of confirmed cases of Lyme disease;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, In 2016, Pennsylvania confirmed 11,443 cases, which
18 translates to 114,430 new cases, accounting for 38% of the
19 nation's cases of Lyme disease; and

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

26 WHEREAS, The most common way to acquire Lyme disease and
27 other tick-borne diseases is to be bitten by a tick that carries
28 the spirochete and, potentially, other infections; and

29 WHEREAS, This disease is not limited to age or ethnic
30 boundaries; and

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

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

7 WHEREAS, The prevention of Lyme disease and other tick-borne
8 diseases is difficult; and

9 WHEREAS, Residents of this Commonwealth can greatly reduce
10 their chance of tick bites and pathogen transmission this spring
11 season if they take proper precautions while engaged in outdoor
12 activities, make frequent tick checks and remove and dispose of
13 ticks promptly and properly; and

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

18 WHEREAS, The schools of this Commonwealth can greatly reduce
19 the risk of Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases among
20 schoolchildren through prevention education and precautions,
21 including instruction to parents regarding steps to take before
22 and after school-related activities such as field trips and
23 sports, prompt and proper tick removals and notification of
24 parents and guardians of tick bites; and

25 WHEREAS, Residents of this Commonwealth should be aware of
26 early, disseminated and late/persistent symptoms, and that a
27 negative Lyme test cannot rule out Lyme disease, as testing may
28 miss approximately 50% of actual cases; and

29 WHEREAS, The early clinical diagnosis and appropriate
30 treatment of these tick-borne disorders and diseases can greatly

1 reduce the risks of continued, diverse and chronic symptoms that
2 can affect every system and organ of the human body and often
3 every aspect of an individual's life; and

4 WHEREAS, "Lyme and Tick-borne Disease Awareness Month"
5 provides an opportunity to focus on these significant and
6 complex diseases, provides information on prevention and
7 personal protection and raises public awareness of the causes,
8 effects, potential severity, diagnostic challenges and treatment
9 options of the disease and underscores important education
10 efforts surrounding Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases;
11 therefore be it

12 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the
13 month of May 2019 as "Lyme and Tick-borne Disease Awareness
14 Month" in Pennsylvania in a continued effort to benefit the
15 overall health and quality of life of the residents of this
16 Commonwealth by increasing their awareness of the threat of tick
17 bites and the potential seriousness of Lyme disease and other
18 tick-borne diseases.