

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 760 Session of 2020

INTRODUCED BY BROWN, KORTZ, BIZZARRO, SCHMITT, MERSKI, RAPP, HENNESSEY, SAINATO, ROTHMAN, DONATUCCI, GLEIM, KAUFFMAN, HICKERNELL, BURNS, EMRICK, MILLARD, PICKETT, MURT, KINSEY, HOWARD, JAMES, OWLETT, RYAN, KIM, BARRAR, MEHAFFIE, LONGIETTI, SAYLOR, BERNSTINE, POLINCHOCK, MACKENZIE, HILL-EVANS, YOUNGBLOOD, WHEELAND, STRUZZI, MENTZER, READSHAW, B. MILLER, MOUL, CIRESI, NEILSON, EVERETT, CAUSER, STAATS, SCHLEGEL CULVER AND GAYDOS, FEBRUARY 24, 2020

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, FEBRUARY 24, 2020

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the month of May 2020 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 caused by the spirochete *Borrelia*
5 *burgdorferi*; and

6 WHEREAS, Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases, which
7 include babesiosis, bartonellosis, anaplasmosis, Rocky Mountain
8 spotted fever, ehrlichiosis and others, pose a serious threat to
9 the 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

15 WHEREAS, The most recent 15-year surveillance study of the

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which was
2 published in 2008, reveals continued emergence and geographic
3 expansion of Lyme disease across the United States; and

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

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

13 WHEREAS, In the last 19 years, Pennsylvania ranked highest in
14 the country in the number of confirmed cases of Lyme disease;
15 and

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

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

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

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

30 WHEREAS, Lyme disease can cause early symptoms, including a

1 rash or flu-like symptoms such as fever, muscle aches, headaches
2 and fatigue, that can easily be misdiagnosed; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 WHEREAS, The early clinical diagnosis and appropriate
29 treatment of these tick-borne disorders and diseases can greatly
30 reduce the risks of continued, diverse and chronic symptoms that

1 can affect every system and organ of the human body and often
2 every aspect of an individual's life; and

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

11 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the
12 month of May 2020 as "Lyme and Tick-borne Disease Awareness
13 Month" in Pennsylvania; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives, in a continued
15 effort to benefit the overall health and quality of life of the
16 residents of this Commonwealth, highlight the threat of tick
17 bites and the potential seriousness of Lyme disease and other
18 tick-borne diseases.