A RESOLUTION

Designating the month of May 2015 as "Lyme 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 and disorders, such as babesiosis, Bartonella and ehrlichiosis, 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 study 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. This is
approximately ten times higher than the number of cases
previously reported to the CDC every year; and

highest in the country in the number of confirmed cases of Lyme
disease; and

WHEREAS, From 2002 to 2012, Pennsylvania reported a total of
46,178 confirmed cases 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
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, The people of this Commonwealth can greatly reduce
their chance of tick pathogen transmission if they take proper
care 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

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WHEREAS, The people of this Commonwealth can greatly reduce the risk of Lyme disease on their properties through landscape, insecticide and other measures 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 in advance and after school-related activities, such as field trips and sports; and
WHEREAS, The people of this Commonwealth should be aware of early, disseminated and late/persistent symptoms; and
WHEREAS, The people of this Commonwealth should be aware 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 persons' lives; therefore be it
RESOLVED, That the Senate designate the month of May 2015 as "Lyme 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 awareness of the threat of infected tick bites and the potential seriousness of Lyme disease and other tick-borne disorders.