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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 324 Session of  
2020

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INTRODUCED BY DINNIMAN, FONTANA, COLLETT, KILLION, LANGERHOLC,  
PHILLIPS-HILL, MARTIN, REGAN AND J. WARD, MAY 8, 2020

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REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, MAY 8, 2020

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A RESOLUTION

1 Designating 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 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 residents of this  
10 Commonwealth; and

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

16 WHEREAS, The most recent 15-year surveillance study of the  
17 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which was  
18 published in 2008, reveals continued emergence and geographic

1 expansion of Lyme disease across the United States; and

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

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

11 WHEREAS, In the last six years, Pennsylvania ranked highest  
12 in the country in the number of confirmed cases of Lyme disease;  
13 and

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

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

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

26 WHEREAS, This disease is not limited to age or ethnic  
27 boundaries; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

26       WHEREAS, The early clinical diagnosis and appropriate  
27 treatment of these tick-borne disorders and diseases can greatly  
28 reduce the risks of continued, diverse and chronic symptoms that  
29 can affect every system and organ of the human body and often  
30 every aspect of an individual's life; and

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

9       RESOLVED, That the Senate designate the month of May 2020 as  
10 "Lyme and Tick-borne Disease Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania in  
11 a continued effort to benefit the overall health and quality of  
12 life of the residents of this Commonwealth by increasing their  
13 awareness of the threat of tick bites and the potential  
14 seriousness of Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases.