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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 866 Session of  
2015

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INTRODUCED BY HENNESSEY, MAY 3, 2016

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
MAY 3, 2016

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A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the month of May 2016 as "Lyme Disease Awareness  
2 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 and  
7 disorders, such as babesiosis, Bartonella and ehrlichiosis, pose  
8 a serious threat to the quality of life of many Pennsylvanians,  
9 with the frequency of diagnosed and reported Lyme disease cases  
10 increasing dramatically over the past several years; and

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

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

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

6       WHEREAS, In the last five years, Pennsylvania ranked highest  
7 in the country in the number of confirmed cases of Lyme disease;  
8 and

9       WHEREAS, From 2002 to 2011, Pennsylvania reported a total  
10 42,032 confirmed cases of Lyme disease; and

11       WHEREAS, In 2014, Pennsylvania reported a total of 17,446  
12 confirmed cases of Lyme disease and in 2015 reported 10,817 new  
13 cases with provisional cases to be confirmed later in 2016; and

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

20       WHEREAS, The most common way to acquire Lyme and related  
21 diseases is to be bitten by a tick that carries the spirochete;  
22 and

23       WHEREAS, This disease is not limited to age or ethnic  
24 boundaries; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

26       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the  
27 month of May 2016 as "Lyme Disease Awareness Month" in  
28 Pennsylvania in a continued effort to benefit the overall health  
29 and quality of life of the residents of this Commonwealth by  
30 increasing their awareness of the threat of infected tick bites

1 and the potential seriousness of Lyme disease and other tick-  
2 borne disorders.