



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Named to Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases

PATTY RITCHIE February 18, 2015

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### Group Will Work to Improve Prevention, Detection and Treatment of Lyme and Other Deadly Diseases

State Senator Patty Ritchie has announced she has been named to the Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases, a group which aims to improve the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of Lyme and other related illnesses.

“In recent years, the region I represent has seen a sharp spike in the number of cases of Lyme disease,” said Senator Ritchie. “I’ve heard from a number of constituents that something more needs to be done to fight back against this potentially deadly disease and I’m pleased to have a role on the Task Force, which

will allow me to be involved as we work to better protect the health of people in our local communities and across the state.”

A potentially debilitating and life-threatening illness, it’s estimated by the state Department of Health that more than 95,000 cases of Lyme have been confirmed in New York State since 1986. While the disease has been reported in every region of the state, in the region Senator Ritchie represents, cases of Lyme have jumped significantly in recent years, from eight in 1999, to 312 in 2013.

Formed in 2013, the Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases has worked to develop legislation and advocate for additional resources to help address the spread of Lyme in New York State. In 2015, the group will seek to build upon funding secured last year and continue to work to identify issues related to the prevention, detection and treatment of tick-borne illnesses.

In addition to her new role on the Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases, Senator Ritchie has been at the forefront of seeking ways to better protect the public from deadly illnesses. In 2014, she spearheaded new efforts to safeguard people and animals from deadly diseases like EEE, Lyme, West Nile and rabies through \$100,000 in funding for preventative programs as well as the creation of the “21st Century Workgroup for Disease Elimination and Reduction;” a group comprised of experts in diseases, infection and public health tasked with pushing for the development of effective vaccines against illnesses.