



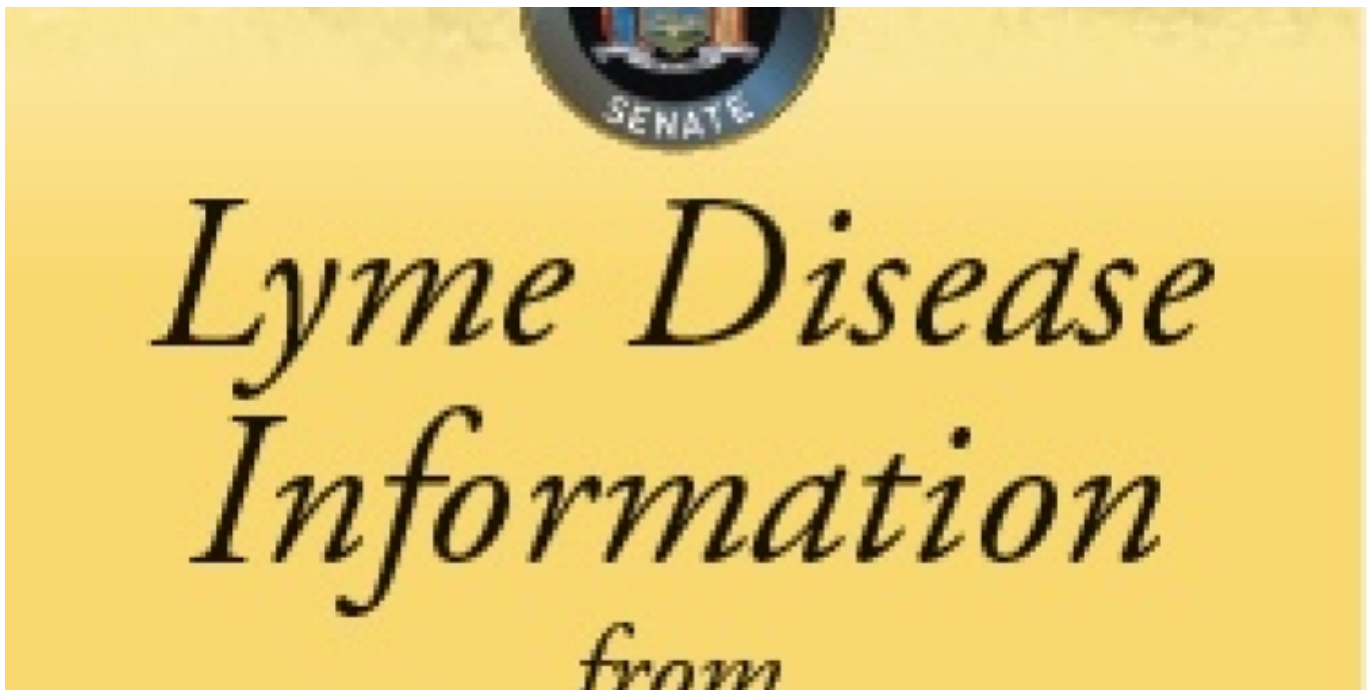
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

## Senator Ken LaValle: Senate Approves Legislation To Combat The Spread of Lyme's Disease

KENNETH P. LAVALLE May 16, 2017

| ISSUE: **LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES, LYME DISEASE**



May 16, 2017 - Senator Ken LaValle announced that the NY State Senate yesterday approved a package of bills that strengthen the state's efforts to combat Lyme and tick-borne diseases. Senator LaValle, a member of the Senate's Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases, noted that the bills will be instrumental in implementing the goals of improving prevention, diagnosis, and treatment to better protect the health of New Yorkers.

“It’s critically important that we continue to work towards increasing awareness and prevention of Lyme and Tick-borne diseases. The legislation we approved will build upon measures that we have taken over the past. The first piece of legislation would assist homeowners by providing information on how to safeguard their yard against ticks. The second bill would assist in our fight for greater insurance coverage for those suffering from the diseases. Another measure would help educate the medical community so they can properly treat patients. I will continue to work diligently to bring resources to combat Lyme’s and other tick-borne diseases back to Long Island.”

According to reports by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), New York State has the third highest number of confirmed cases of Lyme disease in the entire country. While this problem has historically been concentrated on Long Island and in the Hudson Valley, the DOH reports that it’s quickly migrating to other counties across New York. Since Lyme’s disease reporting became available in 1986, 95,000 cases of Lyme have reported to the state.

While the Northeast United States remains one of the hardest-hit regions for Lyme and other tick-borne diseases, the Senate has been actively working to reverse this trend. Its Task Force was created in 2013 to engage stakeholders and develop legislation to address Lyme disease.

This year alone, the Task Force successfully secured \$400,000 in the newly adopted state budget for research, education, and prevention efforts. It will continue to build upon past legislative successes, including two new laws passed last year that requires the Department of Health to design a Lyme and tick-borne disease prevention program, and requires the state to create age-appropriate educational materials that would be readily available to schools. Students will learn how to identify ticks, the procedures for safe removal, and the best practices for protection from ticks.

The measures approved today by the Senate help address issues include:

Bill [S2588](#), which Senator LaValle co-sponsored, provides homeowners with vital and reliable information on the best way to protect their property from ticks. People should be aware of the EPA's approved pesticides that are recommended for tick prevention and the best methods to use pesticides to better protect both people and pets from exposure to ticks on their property. The bill directs the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation to develop guidelines for best practices in treating residential properties to reduce exposure to ticks.

Bill [S2168](#) takes the first major step towards addressing the lack of insurance coverage available to those diagnosed with Lyme disease. Currently, health insurance companies are not required to cover long-term treatment from chronic Lyme or other related diseases, which is devastating for many New Yorkers. People suffering from chronic Lyme disease can experience extreme fatigue, nausea, depression, joint pain and many other symptoms. The bill requires the State Health Care Quality and Cost Containment Commission to meet annually and to submit a report on the impact of providing insurance coverage for Lyme and Tick-Borne disease.

Bill [S2621](#) helps ensure medical professionals are properly trained to treat patients with Lyme or other tick-borne diseases. The bill authorizes the Department of Health (DOH) to award grants for graduate medical education in Lyme and tick-borne diseases, designate organizations as centers of excellence for Lyme and tick-borne diseases, and designate Lyme and tick-borne-disease resource centers.

Today the Senate also approve a resolution ([J1493](#)) that designates May 2017 as Lyme Disease Awareness Month in the State of New York. The resolution helps focus on this significant and complex disease, provides information on and raises public awareness of its causes,

effects and treatments, and underscores important education and research efforts surrounding Lyme and tick-borne diseases.

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