



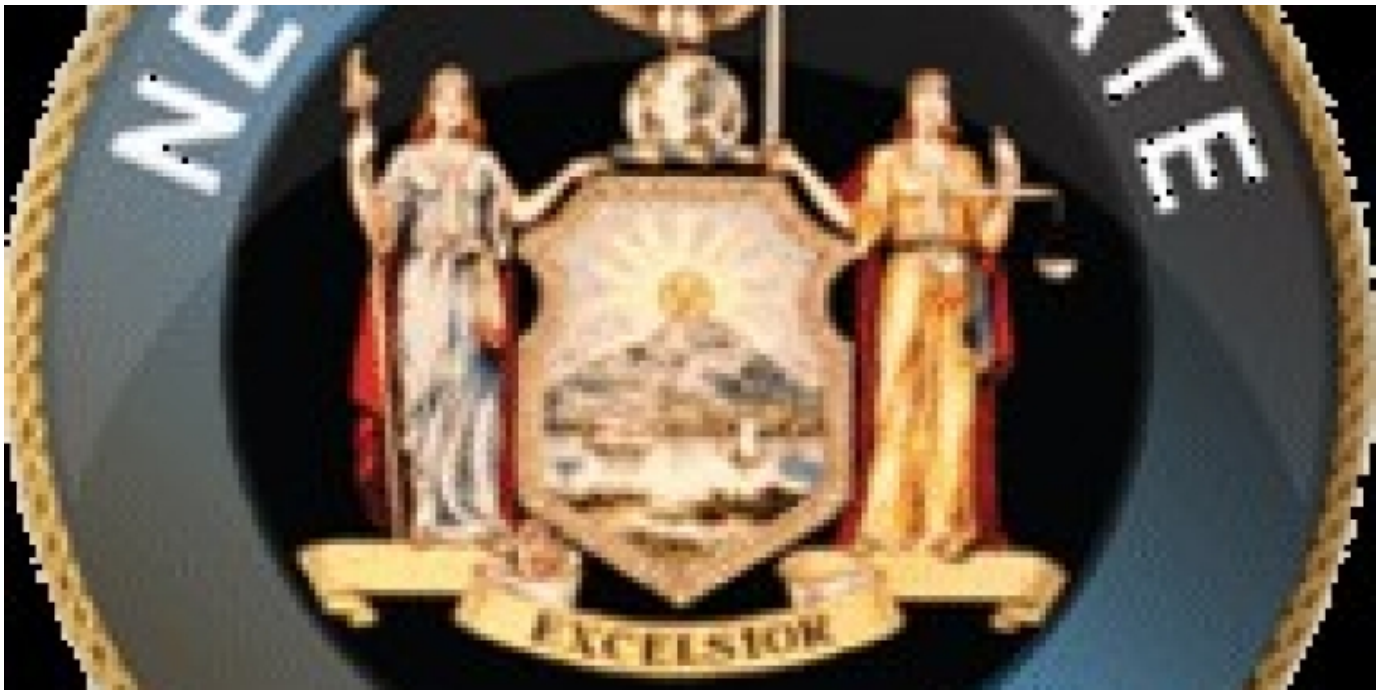
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Hudson Valley Lawmakers Advance Bipartisan Legislation to Increase Funding for Lyme and TBD Research

PETE HARCKHAM June 10, 2021

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



*Albany, NY* – With Lyme and tick-borne diseases (TBDs) on the rise across New York, Senators Pete Harckham and Sue Serino advanced bipartisan legislation today that would bolster funding to more effectively combat the spread and better protect New Yorkers against the scourge of tick-borne illness.

The bill (S. 6871), which passed unanimously in the Senate today, would establish a tax checkoff for Lyme and TBD education, research and prevention efforts, which would allow taxpayers to voluntarily contribute to this unique effort.

“We need to increase funding for research, education and prevention relating to Lyme and other tick-borne diseases, and I thank my colleague Senator Serino for her resolute leadership on this issue,” said Harckham. “These diseases can have debilitating effects on humans, and by enlarging our understanding of how the diseases are transmitted and best treated, we will make a big difference in countless lives around the state. Providing taxpayers with an opportunity to join the fight against these diseases is a great initiative, and I am pleased our legislation that supports this has gained unanimous approval.

“Lyme disease alone impacts almost 500,000 Americans every year, and here in New York, we are at the epicenter of the epidemic,” said Serino. “Combating the spread of Lyme and tick-borne diseases transcends politics and will take committed partners at every level, but most importantly, it will take real resources. This bill is a unique opportunity for New Yorkers themselves to play a role in supporting research, prevention and education initiatives by donating—through a tax checkoff—to a new fund that would be dedicated to bolstering work in this field. I thank Senator Harckham for taking on this issue, tackling ticks head-on and working across the aisle to make the fight against Lyme and TBDs a real priority.”

According to new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 476,000 Americans are diagnosed and treated for Lyme disease each year. While cases of Lyme and TBDs used to be concentrated in and around the Hudson Valley and Long Island, in recent years, the spread of Lyme and TBDs has become a significant statewide issue with case numbers on the rise in nearly every region.

Despite the prominence of vector-borne diseases in the state and numbers rising across the country, funding for Lyme and TBD research has lagged at both the federal and state levels. The bill's passage comes on the heels of news of U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's announcement yesterday of a push for increased funding at the federal level to help states implement the Kay Hagan Tick Act. This would help states more effectively build a public health infrastructure for Lyme and other vector-borne diseases to better raise awareness, support early detection and diagnosis, improve treatment, and fund the Centers of Excellence for Lyme and tick-borne diseases. The Kay Hagan Tick Act was championed by former U.S. Congressman Chris Gibson.

The bill is sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblymember Didi Barrett.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2021-S6871**

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- Introduced
  - - In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate
  - - On Floor Calendar Assembly
    - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to providing for taxpayer gifts for Lyme and tick-borne diseases education, research and prevention and establishing the Lyme and tick-borne diseases education, research and prevention fund

May 20, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Pete Harckham**

Do you support this bill?