

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

JOINT RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING MAY 2007 AS LYME DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH IN THE STATE OF MAINE

WHEREAS, the health and well-being of the citizens of the State of Maine are of paramount importance and Lyme disease is a common but frequently misunderstood illness that, if not caught early and treated properly, can cause serious health problems; and

WHEREAS, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Lyme disease was identified and named in 1977, when arthritis was observed in a cluster of children in and around Lyme, Connecticut and the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists designated Lyme disease as a nationally notifiable disease in January 1991; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is the most common vector-borne disease in the United States and is caused by the spirochete *Borrelia burgdorferi*, which is usually transmitted by the bite of a tick. Children aged 5 to 9 and adults in their 50s and 60s comprise the age groups at the highest risk; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease early on can cause rash and flu-like symptoms such as fever, muscle aches, headaches and fatigue but can be treated with antibiotics if caught early. Unfortunately the disease often goes undetected because it mimics other illnesses or may be misdiagnosed; and

WHEREAS, if left untreated, Lyme disease can lead to severe heart, neurological, eye and joint problems because the bacteria can affect many different organs and organ systems; and

WHEREAS, during 2005, a total of 23,305 cases of Lyme disease were reported in the United States, a 15 percent increase over the previous year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that the actual number of reported cases of Lyme disease that meet its criteria is 10 times the amount reported, bringing the actual number of cases that meet the center's criteria to 233,050 for 2005; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease accounts for 95 percent of all vector-borne infections in the United States and the ticks that spread Lyme disease also spread other diseases, such as ehrlichiosis, anaplasmosis and babesiosis, and the presence of other tick-borne diseases clouds the diagnostic and treatment picture; and

WHEREAS, having a Lyme Disease Awareness Month provides an opportunity to focus on this significant and complex disease; to provide information on and raise public awareness of its causes, effects and treatments; and to underscore important education and research efforts surrounding Lyme and tick-borne diseases; now, therefore, be it

That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-Third Legislature, now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, recognize that May of 2007 is Lyme Disease Awareness Month in order to make our citizens more aware of this prevalent disease; and be it further

That a suitable copy of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Department of Health and Human Services.