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## JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING MAY 2009 AS LYME DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH IN THE STATE

**WHEREAS**, the health and well-being of the citizens of the State 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 5 to 9 years of age 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**, the best protection against Lyme disease is to wear light-colored clothing, with pants tucked into socks when outdoors, and to check oneself carefully for ticks when going back inside; and

**WHEREAS**, during 2007, a total of 27,444 cases of Lyme disease were reported in the United States, a 32% increase over the previous year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that the actual number of 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 274,440 for 2007; and

**WHEREAS**, during 2007, there were a total of 529 cases of Lyme disease reported in the State, a 57% increase over the 338 cases reported in 2006, and 860 cases were reported in the State in 2008, a 62% increase over 2007. Since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that the number of actual cases in the country is 10 times the amount reported, the actual number of cases in the State may be far greater; and

**WHEREAS**, Lyme disease accounts for 95% 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

**RESOLVED:** That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth Legislature now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, recognize that May of 2009 is Lyme Disease Awareness Month in order to make our citizens more aware of this prevalent disease; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Honorable John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine and to the Department of Health and Human Services.