

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 18

Introduced by Assembly Member Chesbro

February 3, 2009

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 18—Relative to Lyme Disease Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 18, as introduced, Chesbro. Lyme Disease Awareness Month. This measure proclaims the month of May 2009 to be Lyme Disease Awareness Month.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Lyme disease is an often misunderstood illness
2 that can cause serious health problems if not caught early and
3 treated properly; and
4 WHEREAS, Lyme disease is a bacterial infection caused by the
5 spirochete, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, and is primarily transmitted by
6 the bite of an infected tick. The disease was first identified in North
7 America in the 1970s in Lyme, Connecticut, for which it was
8 named. The disease has since been found in all 50 states of the
9 United States and has been reported globally in more than 50
10 countries, on six continents, and on several islands; and
11 WHEREAS, Lyme disease is a complex and multisymptom
12 illness. Early signs of infection may include rash and flu-like
13 symptoms, including fever, muscle aches, headaches, and fatigue.
14 Usually Lyme disease responds well to prompt treatment with
15 appropriate antibiotics. If untreated or inadequately treated,
16 however, Lyme disease can invade multiple parts of the body,

1 including the brain and nervous system. In advanced cases patients
2 may become increasingly disabled over time and may suffer
3 crippling muscle and joint pain, neurological impairment,
4 psychological disorders, and a host of other symptoms that can
5 lead to financial hardship, job loss, broken families, increased
6 numbers of people on disability and public support, and even death;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, According to statistics provided by the federal
9 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an average of
10 22,000 new cases of Lyme disease are reported in the United States
11 each year. The CDC estimates that 90 percent of Lyme disease
12 cases are unreported, suggesting that the total number of cases is
13 approximately 220,000 each year. This number is approximately
14 five times the number of new AIDS cases each year. Up to 40
15 percent of Lyme disease cases result in long-term health problems,
16 affecting up to an estimated 88,000 patients annually; and

17 WHEREAS, In California, the bacterium is transmitted by the
18 western blacklegged tick (*Ixodes pacificus*). This tick is most
19 common in the coastal regions and along the western slope of the
20 Sierra Nevada Mountains, but it has also been found in 56 of
21 California's 58 counties; and

22 WHEREAS, Ticks have three life stages: larval, nymphal, and
23 adult. Both nymphs and adults can transmit diseases to humans.
24 Ticks attach themselves to animals such as deer, rodents, and birds
25 and migrate to new areas with those host animals. In some areas
26 of California, Lyme disease infection rates of nymphal ticks have
27 been found to be as high as 42 percent, among the highest in the
28 entire United States. However, since some areas of the state have
29 yet to be tested, the true scope of the problem is unknown; and

30 WHEREAS, Although Lyme disease is the most common
31 vector-borne infection in the United States, the ticks that spread
32 Lyme disease can also spread other diseases. These coinfections
33 include diseases like babesiosis, anaplasmosis, and ehrlichiosis.
34 The presence of coinfections can complicate treatment of Lyme
35 disease; and

36 WHEREAS, Three new borrelial species belonging to the Lyme
37 disease spirochetal complex have been described recently,
38 increasing the number of these bacterial species known to be from
39 California to five and making California the locus of more distinct

1 borrelia species than any other geographical region in the United
2 States; and

3 WHEREAS, The Legislature finds that Lyme disease presents
4 a health threat to Californians; now, therefore, be it

5 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
6 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby proclaims the
7 month of May 2009 to be Lyme Disease Awareness Month; and
8 be it further

9 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
10 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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