

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 10, 2009

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009—10 REGULAR SESSION

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution**

**No. 18**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Chesbro**

*(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bill Berryhill, Block, De Leon, Huffman, Jeffries, Jones, Krekorian, Lieu, Monning, Niello, Portantino, and Smyth)*

*(Coauthors: Senators Cox and Wiggins)*

February 3, 2009

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 18, as amended, 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

1 WHEREAS, Lyme disease is a complex and multisymptom  
2 illness. Early signs of infection may include rash and flu-like  
3 symptoms, including fever, muscle aches, headaches, and fatigue.  
4 Usually Lyme disease responds well to prompt treatment with  
5 appropriate antibiotics. If untreated or inadequately treated,  
6 however, Lyme disease can invade multiple parts of the body,  
7 including the brain and nervous system. In advanced cases patients  
8 may become increasingly disabled over time and may suffer  
9 crippling muscle and joint pain, neurological impairment,  
10 psychological disorders, and a host of other symptoms that can  
11 lead to financial hardship, job loss, broken families, increased  
12 numbers of people on disability and public support, and even death;  
13 and

14 *WHEREAS, Currently, because there is no reliable form of*  
15 *testing that can accurately pinpoint Lyme disease, getting a proper*  
16 *diagnosis and prompt treatment is often extremely difficult; and*

17 WHEREAS, According to statistics provided by the federal  
18 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an average of  
19 22,000 new cases of Lyme disease are reported in the United States  
20 each year. The CDC estimates that 90 percent of Lyme disease  
21 cases are unreported, suggesting that the total number of cases is  
22 approximately 220,000 each year. This number is approximately  
23 five times the number of new AIDS cases each year. Up to 40  
24 percent of Lyme disease cases result in long-term health problems,  
25 affecting up to an estimated 88,000 patients annually; and

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

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

39 WHEREAS, Although Lyme disease is the most common  
40 vector-borne infection in the United States, the ticks that spread

1 Lyme disease can also spread other diseases. These coinfections  
2 include diseases like babesiosis, anaplasmosis, and ehrlichiosis.  
3 The presence of coinfections can complicate treatment of Lyme  
4 disease; and

5 WHEREAS, Three new borrelial species belonging to the Lyme  
6 disease spirochetal complex have been described recently,  
7 increasing the number of these bacterial species known to be from  
8 California to five and making California the locus of more distinct  
9 borrelia species than any other geographical region in the United  
10 States; and

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

13 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*  
14 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby proclaims the  
15 month of May 2009 to be Lyme Disease Awareness Month; and  
16 be it further

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