

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 18

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 16

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

[Filed with Secretary of State April 21, 2009.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 18, Chesbro. Lyme Disease Awareness Month.

This measure proclaims the month of May 2009 to be Lyme Disease Awareness Month.

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is an often misunderstood illness that can cause serious health problems if not caught early and treated properly; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is a bacterial infection caused by the spirochete, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, and is primarily transmitted by the bite of an infected tick. The disease was first identified in North America in the 1970s in Lyme, Connecticut, for which it was named. The disease has since been found in all 50 states of the United States and has been reported globally in more than 50 countries, on six continents, and on several islands; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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