

**STATE OF MAINE**

—  
**IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD  
TWO THOUSAND AND THIRTEEN**  
—

**JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING MAY 2013 AS LYME  
DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH**

**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 commonly reported 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 rashes 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**, epidemiologists have seen increases in the number of diagnoses of Lyme disease over the past 5 years and the state case rate for Lyme disease in Maine reached a record high in 2012 at 83.7 cases per 100,000 persons, with 1,111 Maine residents diagnosed with probable and confirmed cases of the disease; 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**, Lyme disease is the 6th most common nationally notifiable disease and yet the disease does not occur nationwide and is concentrated heavily in the Northeast and upper Midwest, with 96% of Lyme disease cases being reported from 13 states; and

**WHEREAS**, during 2011, there were 33,097 new cases nationally of confirmed and probable cases of Lyme disease, adding to the hundreds of thousands of confirmed cases of this disease; 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 disease and other tick-borne diseases; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:** That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-sixth Legislature now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, recognize that May 2013 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 Department of Health and Human Services.