

BY: M. of A. Barrett

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim
April 2022, as Lyme Disease Awareness Month in the
State of New York

WHEREAS, The health and well-being of the citizens of the State of New York are of paramount importance to this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, Lyme Disease is the most common vector-borne disease in the United States, affecting over 300,000 people a year, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and

WHEREAS, Because climate change is causing New York to experience longer and more severe tick seasons, it is necessary to recognize Lyme Disease Awareness Month in April, rather than May, so the public can be educated earlier on the risks of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases (TBDs); and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease, found in approximately 65 countries worldwide, is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* and is transmitted to humans and animals through the bite of an infected black legged tick, *Ixodes scapularis*; and

WHEREAS, There are more than a dozen tick-borne illnesses in the United States, in addition to Lyme disease; one tick may carry more than one disease, resulting in people receiving a "co-infection" from a single tick bite; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease and its co-infections are generally hard to diagnose because their symptoms often mimic those of dozens of other common illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Those with Lyme and other tick borne diseases can present symptoms that are sometimes misdiagnosed as mental illness, depression, nutritional deficiencies or Alzheimer's disease; and

WHEREAS, The majority of tick-to-human bites occur in the warmer months when ticks are most active, and when more people are enjoying the outdoors; and

WHEREAS, According to the CDC, Lyme disease is found most frequently in the upper Midwest and Northeast United States; in 2015, 95% of Lyme disease cases were reported from 14 states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, Since the 1990s, the number of Lyme disease cases has doubled, and in that same period, the number of counties in the United States identified as high-risk for Lyme has increased by more than 320 percent; and

WHEREAS, The current method of diagnosis recommended by the CDC can be unreliable because the ELISA and Western Blot are indirect tests, and can cause false negatives, according to the International Lyme and Associated Diseases Society; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is hard to diagnose because the most common sign individuals and doctors look for to determine if a person contracted Lyme disease is a red bull's-eye rash surrounding the tick bite ("Erythema Migrans"); however, this rash appears in less than 50 percent of Lyme disease cases; the other indications of this disease are common flu-like symptoms and joint pain, which often lead to misdiagnosis; and

WHEREAS, With the arrival of Spring, more people will enjoy the outdoors and come into contact with ticks; the observance of Lyme Disease Awareness Month provides an opportunity for the State of New York to focus on and bring awareness of Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases to its citizens; and

WHEREAS, Lyme Disease Awareness Month provides an opportunity to focus on this significant and complex disease, to provide information on and raise public awareness about 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 this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 2022, as Lyme Disease Awareness Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York.