Assembly Resolution No. 310

BY: M. of A. Barrett

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 2025, 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 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 (CDC) and the New York State Department of Health, Lyme disease was identified and named in 1977, when arthritis was observed in a cluster of children in and around Lyme, Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) designated Lyme disease as a nationally notifiable disease in January of 1991; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease, found in approximately 80 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, commonly called the deer tick; 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 more than one "co-infection" from a single tick bite; and

WHEREAS, It is difficult to diagnose co-infections because symptoms are very common, but co-infections generally result in a more severe illness, with more symptoms and a longer recovery period; and

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

WHEREAS, Infected ticks normally live on deer and mice and the majority of tick bites occur in the summer 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 2022, 95% of Lyme disease cases were reported from 14 states: Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, In 2022, the federal CDC estimated that 476,000 people are

diagnosed and treated for Lyme disease each year while only 63,000 cases of the disease were actually reported; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease became reportable in New York State in 1986 and is the most commonly reported tick-borne disease in the state, with over 9,000 cases reported each year; and

WHEREAS, Over a 13 year period, Lyme disease was the listed cause of death of nine New York residents outside of New York City, with five victims from the mid-Hudson Valley region; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is hard to diagnose because the most common sign individuals and doctors look for when determining if one contracted Lyme disease is a red bulls eye rash surrounding the tick bite ("erythema migrans"); however, this rash does not appear in a quarter 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 of 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 2025, 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.