



May 14, 2024

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Baldwin and Ranking Member Capito,

We are writing today to express our strong support for expanding efforts around Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Specifically, we are requesting \$30 million in funding for ongoing Lyme disease and tick-borne illnesses work, as well as \$30 million for the Kay Hagan Tick Act, including \$10 million for Centers of Excellence and \$20 million for States and Tribal Organizations Grants, and \$5 million for the LymeX Innovation Accelerator (LymeX) program in FY2025. This investment will equip the CDC to address the serious public health threat of Lyme disease through expanded prevention and surveillance efforts.

As the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Tick-Borne Disease Working Group reported in December 2018, tick-borne diseases are a serious public health threat. There are an estimated 476,000 cases of Lyme disease in the United States annually, which, as the recently released report points out, is significantly higher than previously thought. The current infection rate is nearly 5 times higher than the rate reported in 1991. Nationally these cases lead to an estimated \$1.3 billion in direct medical costs each year. Instances of Lyme disease have increased more than 300% in Northeastern states and by 250% in North-Central states over the last 25 years. Acknowledging this dramatic increase, the report highlights priorities for research and practice in wide-ranging areas including epidemiology, prevention, diagnosis, treatment, access to care, and patient outcomes.


Despite the rising incidence and costs of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses like Powassan, research into strategies for preventing, diagnosing, treating, and surveilling these diseases has historically been underfunded. The CDC invests only \$191 for each new Lyme disease case, despite the high health care costs endured by many individuals with Lyme and other tick-borne diseases and our health care system as a whole.

The level of funding we are requesting for FY2025 would be highly beneficial in addressing the challenges outlined by the Tick-Borne Disease Working Group, including the urgent, unmet needs of patients affected by Lyme disease and those at high risk for developing tick-borne illnesses. Increased funding would enable the CDC to expand underfunded programs

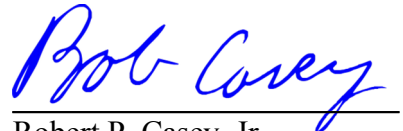
in the area of prevention to identify and validate prevention and control methods, as well as to develop alternate surveillance techniques such as from medical records. Additional funding would also support research to improve diagnostics, especially those that incorporate new technologies more advanced than traditional antibody screening to improve early diagnosis and treatment.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this important public health issue.

Sincerely,



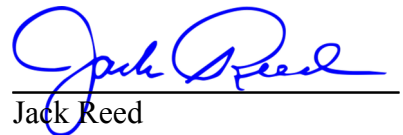
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



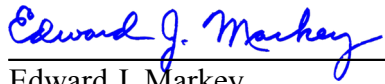
Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



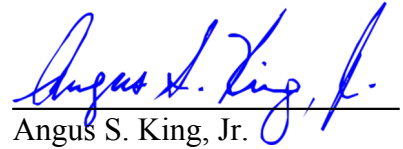
Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator




Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



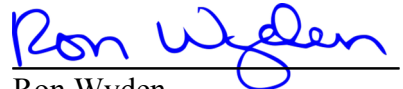
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator