



May 23, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and  
Education  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor HHS, and  
Education  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin,

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 \$35 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, \$20 million for States and Tribal Organizations Grants, and \$5 million for the LymeX Innovation Accelerator (LymeX) program in FY2026. These investments will equip the CDC to address the serious public health threat of Lyme disease through expanded prevention and surveillance efforts.

As report by the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Tick-Borne Disease Working Group in December 2018, tick-borne diseases pose a serious public health threat. There are an estimated 476,000 Americans diagnosed with and treated for Lyme disease in the United States annually<sup>1</sup>, which is significantly higher than previously thought based on recent reporting from the Working Group. The current infection rate is nearly 5 times higher than the rate reported in 1991. 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 the dramatic increase in cases, the Tick Borne Disease Working Group's report highlighted 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

---

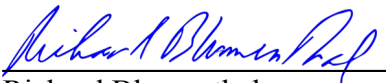
<sup>1</sup> "Lyme Disease Surveillance and Data," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed May 2, 2025, [https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/data-research/facts-stats/index.html#:~:text=Key%20points,and%20Territorial%20Epidemiologists%20\(CSTE\)](https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/data-research/facts-stats/index.html#:~:text=Key%20points,and%20Territorial%20Epidemiologists%20(CSTE).).

diseases has historically been underfunded. Further, while Lyme disease leads to an estimated \$1.3 billion in direct medical costs each year nationwide,<sup>2</sup> the CDC invests only \$191 for each new Lyme disease case.

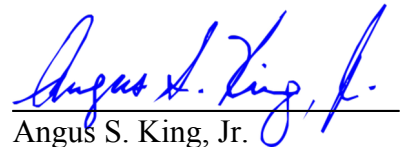
The level of funding we are requesting for FY2026 would be highly beneficial in addressing the challenges outlined by the Tick-Borne Disease Working Group, including the urgent, unmet needs of patients affected by Lyme disease and those at high risk for developing tick-borne illnesses. Increased funding 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



Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



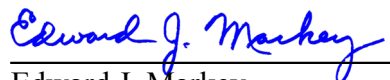
Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

---

<sup>2</sup>Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Dashboard , accessed May 2, 2025, <https://www.hopkinslymetracker.org/>.



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



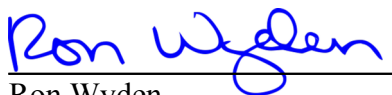
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff  
United States Senator



Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator