



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terry Gipson

Senator Terry Gipson's Statement on New Tick Task Force

TERRY GIPSON October 8, 2013

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SENATOR TERRY GIPSON'S STATEMENT ON NEW TICK TASK FORCE

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY -- New York State Senator Terry Gipson (D-Dutchess, Putnam) issued the following statement on the New York State Senate Majority Coalition's new Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases:

"Today, the New York State Senate Majority Coalition has followed the advice I offered in a letter I sent to all Hudson Valley and Long Island Senators earlier this summer acknowledging the dreadful impact of tick-borne illness by announcing the creation of a Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases. I agree that we need to address future impacts of tick-borne illnesses. However, we need to help our citizens who are currently suffering from tick borne illnesses – those who cannot afford the exorbitant expenses associated with long-term treatment as well as those who can't find treatment because doctors fear retribution for treating these diseases.

"Immediate relief and treatment for individuals who are suffering is why, during this past session, I introduced two bills, the TickBITE Act (S.3478) and the Doctor Protection Bill (S.5520). These bills would both oblige insurance companies to cover the cost of treatment for

chronic tick borne illness as well as protect doctors from persecution for prescribing that treatment. This is legislation that will help people immediately.

"The new task force is co-chaired by Senator Hannon, the Chair of the Senate Health Committee and Senator Carlucci who is a co-sponsor of my TickBITE and Doctor Protection bills. I am calling on the task force to, as their first action, commit to supporting my TickBITE and Doctor Protection bills so that we may address the real problems of real people who are suffering from these terrible illnesses today. I also encourage the other co-chairs, Senator Kenneth LaValle and Senator Elizabeth Little (who recently called for insurance coverage for Lyme disease) to sign on to my legislation as well. By working together and taking real action, we can help families who are suffering right now."

Text of August 20, 2013 letter:

August 20, 2013

Senator Kemp Hannon
595 Stewart Ave. Suite, 540
Garden City, NY 11530

Dear Senator Hannon,

Yesterday, the CDC released a report updating the number of people diagnosed with Lyme disease annually to 300,000...up from their previous figure of 30,000. This reflects a ten-fold increase in Lyme cases. This is a shocking number that should get our collective attention.

Long Island and the Hudson Valley, the two regions we represent in the Senate, are considered to be epicenters of this growing national health concern. I am respectfully requesting that we work together to address this concern by taking action. At the very least, in your role of Health Committee Chairman, please consider hearings about this disease and

treatment based upon the issues raised in my TickBITE (S.3478) and Doctor Protection (S.5520) legislation.

Everywhere I go, constituents of all political stripes support Senate action on tick borne illness in general, and my bills specifically. They recognize, as should we, that this disease knows no party. It only destroys the health of our friends, neighbors and family members. As a result, far too often it destroys their financial health as well because of insurance issues.

I am copying the other Long Island and Hudson Valley senators on this letter in hopes that we can all work together to tackle Lyme and related diseases on behalf of the people we serve. They deserve nothing but our best effort to work together to find prevention and treatment solutions.

Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Regards,

Terry Gipson

New York State Senator

41st District

cc: Senator Ball

Senator Bonacic

Senator Boyle

Senator Carlucci

Senator Flanagan

Senator Fuschillo

Senator Larkin

Senator Latimer

Senator LaValle

Senator Marcellino

Senator Marchione

Senator Martins

Senator Skelos

Senator Stewart-Cousins

Senator Tkaczyk

Senator Zeldin

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