



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Amedore

## Senator Amedore Passes Legislation to Increase Awareness of Lyme and Tick-Borne Illnesses

GEORGE A. AMEDORE, JR. June 17, 2015

Senator George Amedore, a member of the New York State Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases, announced the Senate has passed several bills that will increase awareness and education programs to help protect against lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses that have increased at an alarming rate throughout New York State.

“Lyme and other tick-borne diseases can be debilitating and often life-threatening. It’s a serious health issue that needs to be addressed. Prevention and awareness are important tools to help protect New Yorkers, particularly as we head into the summer months and residents throughout the state are enjoying more time outdoors,” said Senator George Amedore.

The Senate passed three bills today, co-sponsored by Senator Amedore, to help create awareness and prevent the spread of Lyme and other tick-borne illnesses:

One piece of legislation (S.5804) would provide age-appropriate materials for schools and libraries to teach children how to identify ticks, how to check themselves for ticks after being outdoors, and what to do if they find they have been bitten by a tick. The materials would be

developed by the Commissioner of Education, in collaboration with the Commissioners of the Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation.

The Senate also passed a bill (S.5803) that would create a Lyme disease and tick-borne infection awareness and prevention program under the Department of Health's health care and wellness education and outreach program. The program would include guidelines and methods of prevention, including methods for tick removal, recommendations to reduce exposure to ticks, and guidelines on the safe use of recommended insect repellents. The Department of Health currently conducts education and outreach programs on a variety of diseases and conditions. With the increase in cases of tick-borne illnesses throughout the state, it's important the Department of Health provide up-to-date information for New Yorkers.

In addition, the Senate moved legislation (S.5802) for the establishment of guidelines by the Department of Environmental Conservation on the best pest-management and tick prevention methods for property owners to help protect themselves and pets from exposure.

This year's State budget included \$600,000 to assist the state's disease elimination and reduction efforts. The funds will be used to implement recommendations made last year by the Senate's Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases to improving research, education, diagnosis and treatment.

The Task Force has a public forum scheduled on June 30<sup>th</sup>, from 6 pm – 7:30 pm to continue to examine solutions for improved prevention, diagnosis and treatment in order to better protect the health of New Yorkers.

The bills were sent to the Assembly for consideration.

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