



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## Seward Joins Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases

JEFF BISHOP, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR    October 26, 2017

| ISSUE: **LYME DISEASE TASK FORCE, LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES**

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**ONEONTA, 10/26/17** -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I/Ref – Oneonta) today announced that he has been appointed by New York State Senate Majority Leader John J. Flanagan to the [Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases \(TBDs\)](#). The Task Force is charged with improving prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of these diseases to better protect the health of New Yorkers and their families.

Senate Majority Leader John J. Flanagan said, “It’s an honor to appoint Senator Seward to this critical Senate Task Force. As Chair of the Insurance Committee and representative of an area where tick-borne illnesses continue to spread, Senator Seward brings a valuable perspective that will help increase public awareness and prevent Lyme disease in Central New York and all throughout the Upstate region. The Task Force works tirelessly on enhancing research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment for harmful tick-borne illnesses.”

Senator James L. Seward said, **“The Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases has performed groundbreaking work and helped focus the spotlight on tick-borne illnesses. We know more today than ever before about these debilitating ailments and are making strides in prevention and treatment. However, it is clear that Lyme disease and other TBDs are spreading to new areas of the state – I hear from constituents regularly who have been infected – and we need to intensify our efforts. I look forward to working closely with Task Force Chair Senator Sue Serino and Senate Health Committee Chair Senator Kemp Hannon to implement new strategies that help individuals suffering with Lyme and TBDs and snuff out new cases before they start.”**

The task force has been working since 2013 to engage stakeholders and develop legislation to address Lyme disease. It will build upon past legislative successes, including two new laws passed last year that require the Department of Health to design a Lyme and TBD awareness program, and require the state to create age-appropriate educational materials that would be readily available to schools. Another new law passed this year will help keep kids safer through the use of insect repellent at summer camps.

Senator Seward is also co-sponsoring [newly introduced legislation \(S.6926\)](#) to create specific protocol to notify individuals of their diagnoses related to Lyme and other TBDs. The senate bill would require the Commissioner of Health to work with health care providers to develop a standard protocol and patient notification for the diagnosis and treatment of Lyme and TBDs.

**“In discussing this issue with individuals who have contracted Lyme and doctors alike, it is clear that diagnosis and treatment plans vary greatly. We need to develop a uniform health care strategy**

that will increase positive outcomes so people aren't left guessing if they are infected or if they will be left to struggle with a debilitating disease for the rest of their lives. This new legislation is a step toward ensuring better long-term care," added Seward.

While the Northeast United States continues to be one of the hardest-hit regions for Lyme and other tick-borne diseases, the senate has been actively working to reverse this trend. This year alone, the task force successfully secured a record \$400,000 in the state budget for research, education, and prevention efforts.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2017-S6926**

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- Introduced
  
- ◦ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Directs the commissioner of health to establish protocols for the diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease and other tick borne diseases

October 20, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Kemp Hannon**

Do you support this bill?