



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## MAJOR VICTORY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES:

SUSAN SERINO March 30, 2018

| ISSUE: **LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES**

| COMMITTEE: **TASK FORCE ON LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES**



ALBANY, NY - Senator Sue Serino and Senator Kemp Hannon today announced that the final state budget includes an unprecedented allocation of \$1 million to combat Lyme and tick-borne diseases (TBDs) in the state.

*“By securing a record \$1 million to combat the spread of Lyme and tick-borne diseases in the final state budget, we sent a clear message about how critically important it is to ensure that combating the spread of these diseases remains a priority,” said Senator Sue Serino, who chairs the Senate’s Task Force. “We*

*have a duty to act swiftly and effectively to address this growing epidemic, but we cannot do that without adequate funding, and today the NYS Senate stepped up to the plate. I thank my colleagues and Senator Kemp Hannon for supporting this critical initiative.”*

*Senator Kemp Hannon, Chair of the Senate’s Health Committee said, “The Senate has been the driving force in addressing Lyme and other tick-borne diseases in New York, and this \$1 million allocation is another example of that commitment. Finding effective solutions to combat the spread of this debilitating epidemic is crucial, and this additional funding is necessary to progress in areas of diagnosis, treatment and prevention. I thank all of my Senate colleagues who supported this measure and Senator Serino for her leadership.”*

In August of last year, Senators Serino and Hannon convened a public hearing on Lyme and TBDs that highlighted the need for a coordinated statewide response.

During the hearing, the State Department of Health announced a series of initiatives aimed at enhancing and expanding its tick surveillance and education efforts to better protect New Yorkers. While the announcement was met with fanfare, despite multiple calls to fund these initiatives, additional prevention efforts, and critically important research, the Governor’s Executive Budget Proposal introduced in January cut last year’s funding for Lyme and TBDs and failed to include any new funding to directly address the issue. Of the two One-House Budget Proposals that were later advanced, only the Senate’s included new funding for Lyme and TBDs.

The funding has been allocated to the Task Force and will be directed to programming with an emphasis on education, prevention and research. Since taking office and being named Task Force Chair, Senator Serino has secured over \$2.5 million to help the state and local communities better address the epidemic.