

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education & Related  
Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education & Related  
Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

We the undersigned respectfully request the Committee appropriate \$30M to fund the Kay Hagan Tick Act for programs at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and \$93M to fund Lyme disease research at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), National Institute of Health (NIH) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The President's Fiscal Year 2021 Budget request increased CDC's vector-borne and tickborne budget by \$13.6M over Fiscal Year 2020 enacted "which will enable CDC to address the rising threat of tickborne diseases in the United States". We believe this is a good down payment to funding the Kay Hagan Tick Act, a provision in the FY 2020 Further Consolidate Appropriations Act, H.R. 1865, signed into law by the President on December 20, 2019 (P.L. 116-94). The Kay Hagan Tick Act authorizes \$30M annually over five years to the CDC in two areas:

1. The CDC is provided \$10,000,000 to award grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to institutions of higher education for the establishment or continued support of regional centers of excellence in vector-borne diseases. The purpose is to address vector-borne diseases with emphasis on Lyme and other tick-borne diseases. CDC should give greater funding weight to Lyme disease as the most common vector-borne disease according to the CDC, with the following objectives (1) facilitate collaboration between academia and public health organizations for public health surveillance, prevention, and response activities; (2) provide training for public health entomologists and other health care professionals, as appropriate; (3) conduct research to develop and validate prevention and control tools and methods, including evidence-based and innovative, evidence-informed tools and methods to anticipate and respond to disease outbreaks; (4) prepare for and respond to outbreaks of vector-borne diseases, including Lyme and tick-borne diseases.
2. The CDC is further provided \$20,000,000 for purposes of entering into cooperative agreements with health departments of States, political subdivisions of States, and Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations in areas at high risk of Lyme

and other vector-borne diseases in order to increase capacity to identify, report, prevent, and respond to such diseases and related outbreaks.

The President's Fiscal Year 2021 budget request for HHS also increased funding by ["an additional \\$44 million"](#) to accelerate NIH's priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan [for Tickborne Disease Research]". NIH's FY2021 budget request Executive Summary states:

"Reported cases of tickborne diseases (TBDs) continue to increase in the United States as tick species expand their geographical reach and new tick-transmitted pathogens emerge."

Accordingly, the President's requests boosts NIH's Lyme disease research by \$19M from an [estimated \\$34M in FY2020 to \\$53M in FY2021](#). Our request for an additional \$40M for Lyme disease in FY2021 is well-justified in NIH's research budget to "accelerate" the important and ongoing research into better diagnostics and cures in American university and research institutions.

The proliferation of Lyme disease throughout the United States with over 300,000 new cases annually, many of which go undiagnosed for years, clearly demonstrates the need for increasing Federal research funding for Lyme and other tickborne diseases to develop better diagnostics and cures. Lyme disease diagnostics are unreliable and there is no cure. Unfortunately, Lyme disease research funding at NIH NIAID has been in decline in today's dollars for the last 20 years and now requires immediate increased funding for better diagnostics, therapies and a cure. Lyme disease research funding shrunk over the last two decades from [\\$37M \(\\$26M actual\) in FY2000](#) to \$34M in FY2020, despite CDC reported cases expanding threefold in the same timeframe. Better diagnostics are not only critically important to patients, but also to researchers to determine if a Lyme disease therapy or cure is in fact working with a patient so that it can be given research priority. Lyme disease accounts for the lion's share [or 72% \(2017 CDC data\) of reported tickborne diseases](#). Accordingly, at least 70% of our requested \$59M FY2021 increase over FY2020 for NIH tickborne disease research should be allocated towards Lyme disease research.

Again, we respectfully request the Committee to appropriate \$30M to fund the Kay Hagan Tick Act for programs at the CDC and \$93M to fund Lyme disease research at NIH's NIAID in Fiscal Year 2021. We appreciate Committee's consideration.

Sincerely,

Center for Lyme Action & [Co-signers]

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education & Related  
Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
136 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education & Related  
Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
136 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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