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State Representative Peggy Sayers
Senator Handley,
Chairs of Public Health Committee

Dear Rep. Sayers and Sen. Handley:

I am writing this letter in support of bill, #5747, calling for the reinstatement of laboratory reporting for Lyme disease in the state of CT. I regret that I will not be able to attend the public hearings on the bill. I am away, and will not be returning to CT until March 8th. Please accept this letter as testimony, regarding the bill.

In my psychotherapy practice, specializing in adolescent and family therapy, I have seen the devastation that Lyme disease can cause. Since I saw my first client with undiagnosed Lyme in 1991, a 15 year old boy who had psychotic symptoms and had gone from being an Honors student in school to failing everything, I have been committed to helping families deal with this devastating illness, both in my practice, and in the work I do in the Lyme community - speaking, writing, and participating in the development of community education programs.

Lyme disease is a very serious problem in CT, affecting the lives of countless families. Most of the children I see in my Brewster practice live in CT and attend CT schools. Many require special supports in school, due to their special needs, from this devastating illness. Some are too ill to attend school, even on a part-time basis.

Mandating laboratory reporting will help us to understand the magnitude of the tick-borne disease problems in CT. It's an important next step in helping our citizens. Aside from helping those who are already ill, understanding the extent of the problem could help us work toward prevention, and early diagnosis, easing the burden on the schools, for example, by lowering the number of seriously ill children they need to educate. Providing us with a more realistic picture regarding the number of people who have Lyme disease could help us, as Attorney General Blumenthal has said, obtain more federal funding for Lyme disease research.

I respectfully request that this letter be entered into the testimony at the hearing, and I affirm that the content of this letter is factual and accurate.

Sincerely,

Sandra K. Berenbaum, LCSW, BCD