

Public Health Committee

House Bill #6200

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF LONG-TERM ANTIBIOTICS FOR THE
TREATMENT OF LYME DISEASE

In yet another obnoxiously white room, I sat locked in a chair, holding my head in my right hand, my left arm throbbing with pain from being stabbed repeatedly, and my eyes focused on the building pile of vials containing my lethal blood, knowing that not one of them would convince any part of the numerous ignorant doctors that I do in fact have Chronic Lyme Disease. That is how I spent the summer before my junior year of high school, thirteen years after I had originally been diagnosed. Despite the fact that Lyme Disease has consistently been documented in the United States since 1975, it is still a politically debated issue that has become a matter of life or death for many. Living with Chronic Lyme Disease means that I am battling a debilitating illness as well as doctors with closed minds on treatment protocols who are trying to stop the doctors who are willing to consider all options. I have become the person I am proud to be today as a result of this disease but it has been nothing close to easy getting here.

For me, the toughest time during my treatment started in April of my junior year when after having tried every oral antibiotic available, I still wasn't feeling better at all and started to get considerably worse. At that point, the critical decision was made to put me on an intravenous antibiotic since it goes directly into the blood stream and is able to pass through the cell membrane. It was hard enough to deal with the physical aspect of Lyme, which simply put is similar to having the worse case of the flu imaginable. Then, in addition, I was incredibly frustrated because even after regrettably stopping almost all extracurricular activities, I still wasn't performing academically to the level I knew I was capable of. On the rare occasion that I saw my friends, I loved hearing about all the activities they were participating in and what was happening at school, but it was absolutely heartbreaking not to be able to be a part of it, especially when I had just become an upperclassman and was supposed to be excelling more than ever. All I could think about was how little control I had over my life and I felt absolutely helpless.

The intravenous medication, although vital to my treatment, completely disrupted my life, making me so sick that I could barely get out of bed, eat, shower or do any part of my normal routine. The side effects were so severe that I was forced to go on medical leave for the last quarter of that school year. Afterwards, I spent my entire summer meeting with tutors daily and taking exams in the high school office to complete my school work.

It's been devastating to be this disabled and to not be properly treated. I travel to New York and New Jersey to see the only doctors that have actually helped me to get better. If the proper treatment was available in my state, I could have stayed on long-term antibiotics and would be able to function decently now.

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