

Chairs and Members of the Committee on Children:

I am writing to you to express my support of Raised Bill No.207. This bill would award \$450,000.00 to the Connecticut Department of Health to fund a Lyme Disease and Prevention and Education Program so that a statewide Lyme Prevention and Education effort based on the Ridgefield task force BLAST model can be executed.

Not only am I a victim of chronic lyme disease but I know several other people who, despite the traditional treatment, continue to suffer the misery of late stage lyme. I was Diagnosed 5 years ago after developing the tell tale rash although I believe I contracted lyme more than 20 years earlier when the disease was virtually unheard of and therefore never tested for. I was treated with the normal round of antibiotics but I still suffer relapses regularly yet my lyme tests come back negative each and every time. How do I know I still suffer from lyme? Because the symptoms I experience are the exact symptoms when I was diagnosed – the same pains, the same fatigue. In addition, I now suffer from neurologic symptoms associated with late stage lyme – brain fog, muscle vibrations, eye problems to name just a few, but not a single doctor will accept lyme as a diagnosis. You have no idea how miserable it is to be sitting in the doctors office in agonizing pain only to be told you have nothing wrong with you – nothing wrong?? Feeling like you are about to die is not normal! I know what it feels like to be healthy and this is not it! On my worst days I feel like curling into a little ball and dying – because that is exactly what it feels like is going to happen. It's terrifying but still doctors tell me I have nothing wrong with me. Something is wrong! And something is wrong when doctors refuse to listen to their patients and refuse to admit that chronic lyme exists. Why? Why the insistence that this disease that so many people suffer from doesn't exist? I work with a young mother who contracted lyme approximately two years ago and her life has been virtually destroyed because of the disease. She used to be very active, swimming and enjoying activities with her young children but she has had to completely stop all her activities. There are days she can barely function! She has spent most of her life savings trying to get better – how can this be?? Why is it so costly to treat people with lyme? Not only do they have to suffer the symptoms of lyme, but they go broke trying to get better! There seems to be a taboo on diagnosing late stage or chronic lyme! Why?? I cant understand it! It's out there and people need to be educated! People need to be educated on how to avoid getting infected and how to know when they have been infected so that they can get treatment right away! Doctors need to be educated so that patients aren't made to feel they have mental issues such as depression when in fact they are suffering from lyme. Am I depressed? YES! But because I live in pain almost every day of my life from lyme and there is NO ONE to help me!! There are so many people suffering from lyme and it doesn't need to be that way! People need to be educated so that they can be protected! So that we can put an end to the suffering and put an end to this epidemic that is stealing the lives of so many people! No one should have to live this way! It can be prevented – we can save many more people from a life of misery just by educating the public.

I ask you to please vote yes to this funding so that we can educate the public about this debilitating disease and prevent more people from contracting lyme and destroying their lives.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Sadlier