

## RE: Raised Bill No. 207

To: Chairs and Members of the Committee on Children, I am writing in support of Raised Bill No. 207, AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR A LYME DISEASE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM. I believe the DPH should award \$ 450,000 to implement and sustain a statewide Lyme Disease prevention effort combining mass media marketing and community based education on the BLAST Lyme prevention model, an existing evidence-based efficient and cost effective program. BLAST has built solid name recognition as well as valuable private, corporate and public health partnerships over the last six years. Its recommendations will benefit all of CT citizens while affording educators, social and public media and advertising strategies to reinforce Lyme prevention.

BLAST stands for the five most important measures people can take to prevent tick-borne disease by reducing tick bites

- B stands for bathing soon after spending time outdoors
- L reminds people to look over their bodies for ticks and remove them promptly
- A encourages people to apply repellents appropriately when outdoors
- S stands for spraying the perimeter of yards at the most effective time of year
- T reminds people to treat pets

This request is vitally important as our citizens are exceedingly concerned about the raise in Lyme disease rates in our state, with one of the highest rates in the country. Although Lyme disease can be mild, the lack of education and consensus among doctors as to its treatment, leave many patients ( of which I am one) suffering with chronic illness affecting multiple body organs and the quality of my life.

A commitment of state funds is needed to implement and sustain a statewide prevention program focused on raising awareness of tick-borne disease prevention in 2015. With treatment difficult, the importance of prevention becomes greater.

Sincerely,  
Susan Schiffres

Cheshire, CT