



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

October 28, 2005

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Dear Friends,

I sincerely regret that I cannot be with you today as the House is in session in Washington voting on a series of bills; one to condemn threats against Israel and another to fund and reform programs at the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration.

I began advocating Congressional action to support Lyme patients and Lyme Disease research in the early 1990s, after hosting a meeting with key officials for the Center for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health and local elected officials from Monmouth County in New Jersey, including former Assemblywoman Clare Farragher, a Lyme patient, and former Wall Township school board President, Pat Smith -- who you now know as President of The Lyme Disease Association.

We were alarmed by the high incidence of Lyme in central New Jersey and were determined to find ways to help the many NJ families who were struggling with poorly diagnosed Lyme conditions and insurance companies unwilling to pay for their proper treatment. I worked with one NJ family in which all five members of the family had Lyme disease.

In July of this year, I was joined by Congresswoman Kelly in introducing the "Lyme and Tick-borne Disease Prevention, Education, and Research Act of 2005," which is a companion bill to legislation (S. 1479) introduced in the Senate. This bill provides an increase in total research and education funding of \$20 million per year over 5 years, which is much needed. The bill also establishes a Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee designed to be a focus of communication and coordination among patient representatives, the scientific/medical community, and agencies. The Lyme community has been seeking this voice for a decade.

This bill is supported by approximately 90 Lyme disease associations across the country. I am hopeful that the House and the Senate will act upon their companion bills to provide a new push to make progress in finding desperately sought answers to research on Lyme disease. I am gratified to know that, no matter what, all of you will be out there -- whether in your laboratories or in your offices -- dedicating yourselves to research and to treatments to bring relief to those suffering from Lyme disease. I am committed to working in Congress to try to get you the support you need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Smith".

Chris Smith

Member of Congress