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House of Representatives

21st Century Cures Act

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey...I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his extraordinary leadership on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in 1992, 24 years ago, I met—along with a great advocate, Pat Smith—with top officials of NIH and CDC on Federal guidelines that precluded the existence of chronic Lyme disease. Subsequently, every Congress, I would introduce legislation trying to get a diversity of viewpoints so that clinicians, patients, and other advocates could be heard.

Today, CDC estimates there are about 380,000 cases of Lyme disease; and a provision in this bill, an important, game-changing provision, insisted upon by Majority Leader KEVIN MCCARTHY and Chairman UPTON requires

that a new working group on tickborne disease includes members with a diversity of viewpoints, including patients, clinicians, and researchers. This working group will make a difference. Those patients—and there are tens of thousands of them—have been told chronic Lyme disease doesn't exist, what you are feeling can be attributable to some other disease, and they don't get better.

I thank the chairman for doing this. Also, as cofounder and co-chairman of both the Alzheimer's Caucus 16 years ago and the Autism Caucus 16 years ago, I am thankful for the great work that this will do for those patients as well

