



Congressman Chris Smith's Leadership on Lyme *(Excerpts)*

Overview:

Congressman Chris Smith has consistently worked to address the needs of the Lyme disease community. Since 1993, Smith has authored comprehensive amendments and legislation to improve research, federal collaboration, and the lives of those suffering from Lyme disease. Here are some excerpts of his vast efforts on this issue:

Legislation:

118th Congress (2023-2024)

- Borrowing provisions from legislation he introduced in the previous Congress (HR 3637), Smith secured **a record \$5 million in funding** through the *2024 Further Consolidated Appropriations Act* for the LymeX Innovation Accelerator Program. The LymeX Diagnostics Prize competition entered Phase 3, with the ultimate goal of bringing new and improved diagnostic tools to the U.S. market after the final stage of the competition concludes in FY 25.
- With the help of the Lyme disease community, Smith also successfully advocated for an additional \$1 million in funding for the Kay Hagan Tick Act, which created—for the first time—a new whole-of-government national strategy to combat Lyme and other tick-borne diseases. The CDC released its *National Public Health Strategy to Prevent and Control Vector-Borne Diseases in People* in February 2024, marking the largest formal, coordinated federal effort on the prevention and control of vector-borne diseases like Lyme.

117th Congress (2021-2022)

- In 2021, Smith introduced the [LymeX Authorization Act](#) (HR 3637) to codify the LymeX Innovation Accelerator Program. Established in 2018, LymeX harnesses science and innovation to accelerate advancements in Lyme disease prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. While the bill was not enacted, funding for the Smith provisions were advanced.
- Smith also introduced the [Children Inflicted by Lyme Disabilities \(CHILD\) Act of 2021](#) (HR 3636), which would expand special education protections to children with health impairments resulting from Lyme or other tick-borne disease.
- Additionally, Smith introduced an [amendment to the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act \(NDAA\)](#) that would direct the Government Accountability Office—the federal government’s “watchdog” agency—to investigate the Department of Defense’s (DOD) possible weaponization of ticks and other insects with Lyme disease. This amendment passed the House of Representatives.

116th Congress (2019-2020):

- To continue his work on Lyme disease, Smith—together with House Lyme Disease Caucus co-chair Collin Peterson—introduced the [TICK Act \(Ticks: Identify, Control, Knockout Act\) \(H.R.](#)

[3073](#)) to create a new national strategy to aggressively fight Lyme disease and target an additional \$180 million to boost funding for research, prevention and treatment programs.

- Smith also introduced the [National Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Control and Accountability Act of 2019 \(H.R. 220\)](#) to establish the Office of Oversight and Coordination for Tick-Borne Diseases (TBD Office). This office will oversee the much-needed creation and implementation of a national strategy to help combat the threat of Lyme disease. The bipartisan bill was introduced at the beginning of the 116th Congress on January 3, 2019.
- The House passed the Smith Lyme amendment to *2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)* which directs the Inspector General (IG) of the Department of Defense to investigate the “[possible involvement of DOD biowarfare labs in the weaponization of Lyme disease in ticks](#) and other insects” from 1950-1975.
- The House adopted the Smith Lyme amendment to *H.R. 2740 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Defense, State, Foreign Operations, and Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2020*. The Smith amendment added [\\$2 million to the DOD’s Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program \(CDMRP\) for Tick-Borne Disease Research](#) which primarily helps service personnel and their families exposed to Lyme.
- Additionally, the House passed the Smith Lyme amendment to add [\\$1 million for Lyme disease research at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

115th Congress (2017-2018):

- In 2017, Smith helped secure a necessary increase—\$353.6 million—in funding for the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (which funds Lyme disease research and other infectious diseases), bringing total funding for these institutes to \$5.26 billion through the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018*.
- Smith also introduced the [National Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Control and Accountability Act of 2018 \(H.R. 5900\)](#) to establish the Office of Oversight and Coordination for Tick-Borne Diseases (TBD Office) to oversee the creation and implementation of a national strategy.

114th Congress (2015-2016):

- In 2016, Smith worked with Rep. Fred Upton to include provisions in the [21st Century Cures Act \(P.L. 114-255\)](#), to establish an Interagency Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Working Group in order to further facilitate research, development, and collaboration on Lyme disease. Under the *21st Century Cures Act*—which became law in December 2016—the HHS Secretary established a Tick-Borne Disease Working Group comprised of federal and public members with diverse disciplines and views pertaining to tick-borne diseases. The Working Group is required to report on its findings and recommendations every two years to both Congress and the HHS Secretary.
 - The inaugural report, released in November 2018, “Tick-Borne Disease Working Group 2018 Report to Congress” notes that the number of cases of Lyme disease has increased exponentially over the past twenty-five years in the United States, with approximately 300,000 cases reported annually.
- Additionally, Smith and the Lyme Disease Caucus (which Smith co-chairs), secured in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016*—for the first time ever—**\$5 million in funding for Lyme and other tick-borne diseases research** through the DOD’s Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP). Given the challenge, \$5 million is not enough, however it is almost equal to twenty percent of the National Institute of Health’s (NIH) current annual Lyme budget. Due to Smith’s efforts, Tick-borne diseases research within the CDMRP has been funded continuously at \$5 million.
- Smith also introduced [H.R. 665](#), which authorized \$1.2 million over five years— from 2015 through 2019—to establish a Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee.

113th Congress (2013-2014):

- At the beginning of the 113th Congress, Smith introduced the [*Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Prevention, Education, and Research Act of 2013 \(H.R. 611\)*](#). The bill would have required the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish the Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee and authorized \$1.2 million over five years— from 2014 through 2018. The Committee would advise the HHS Secretary regarding: (1) interagency coordination on efforts to address tick-borne diseases, (2) opportunities to coordinate efforts with other federal agencies and private organizations addressing such diseases, (3) interagency coordination and communication with constituency groups, (4) ensuring that a broad spectrum of scientific viewpoints is represented in public health policy decisions and that information disseminated to the public and physicians is balanced, and (5) advising relevant federal agencies on priorities related to Lyme and tick-borne diseases.
- Smith also introduced separate legislation, [*H.R. 610*](#), which authorized \$1.2 million over five years— from 2013 through 2017—to establish a Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee.

112th Congress (2011-2012):

- Smith continued his efforts to help the Lyme disease community in the 112th Congress and introduced [*H.R. 2557*](#), which authorized \$1.2 million over five years— from 2012 through 2016—to establish a Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee.

111th Congress (2009-2010):

- In the 111th Congress, Smith built on his previous efforts to promote national coordination on Lyme disease and introduced the [*Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Prevention, Education, and Research Act of 2009 \(H.R. 1179\)*](#), which authorized \$1.2 million over five years— from 2010 through 2014. H.R. 1179 had 97 cosponsors and required the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish the Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee.

110th Congress (2007-2008):

- In the 110th Congress, Smith introduced the [*Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Prevention, Education, and Research Act of 2007 \(H.R. 741\)*](#), which authorized \$1 million over five years— from 2008 through 2011. H.R. 741 had 116 cosponsors and required the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish a Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee.
- Smith also introduced a resolution, [*H.Res. 337, Supporting the goals and ideals of a Lyme Disease Awareness Month*](#).

109th Congress (2005-2006):

- In 2005, Smith introduced the [*Act for Lyme Education and Research and Tick-Borne Diseases \(H.R. 2877\)*](#), which focused on establishing a five-year plan providing for Lyme and studying chronic Lyme. The plan authorized \$500,000 over two years—2006 and 2007.
- Smith also introduced the [*Lyme and Tick-borne Disease Prevention, Education, and Research Act of 2005 \(H.R. 3427\)*](#), which authorized \$1 million over five years— from 2006 through 2009. H.R. 3427 had 83 cosponsors and required the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish a Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee.

107th Congress (2001-2002):

- In the 107th Congress, Smith introduced the [*Lyme Disease Initiative of 2001 \(H.R. 1254\)*](#), which established a program to help reduce the incidence and prevalence of Lyme disease, with the goal of ensuring that patients, advocates, and scientists with diverse viewpoints would be fairly

represented in public health policy decisions affecting Lyme. The bill also called for establishing a Lyme Disease Task Force, authorized \$40 million over five years— from 2002 through 2006—and had 63 cosponsors.

106th Congress (1999-2000):

- In the 106th Congress, Smith introduced the [*Lyme Disease Initiative of 1999 \(H.R. 2790\)*](#), which—like Smith’s legislation in the 105th Congress—directed the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, of Agriculture, of the Interior, and of Defense to: (1) establish a specified detection test, improved surveillance and reporting system, and prevention goals to provide for a reduction in the incidence and prevalence of Lyme disease and related tick borne infectious diseases; and (2) establish a five-year plan of activities toward achieving those goals, and carry them out. It also established the Lyme Disease Taskforce to advise the Secretaries with respect to achieving such goals. The bill authorized \$40 million over five years— from 2000 through 2004—and had 56 cosponsors.

105th Congress (1997-1998):

- In the 105th Congress, to bring further awareness to Lyme disease and help prevent further cases, Smith introduced the [*Lyme Disease Initiative Act of 1998 \(H.R. 3795\)*](#) to establish a program to provide for a reduction in the incidence and prevalence of Lyme disease, with the goal of ensuring that patients, advocates, and scientists with diverse viewpoints would be fairly represented in public health policy decisions affecting Lyme. The bill also called for establishing a Lyme Disease Task Force to provide advice to the Secretaries on achieving the goals. The bill authorized \$45 million over five years— from 1999 through 2003.

103rd Congress (1993-1994):

- To address the need for further research and help combat the ongoing threat of Lyme disease, Smith offered an amendment to the [*Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 1994 \(H.R. 3116\)*](#), which specifically earmarked funding to establish a Lyme Disease research program through the Environmental Hygiene Agency of the U.S. Department of the Army. It passed and became law.