

**CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

1540 Kuser Road, Suite A9  
Hamilton, NJ 08619-3828  
(609) 585-7878  
TTY (609) 585-3650

108 Lacey Road, Suite 38A  
Whiting, NJ 08759-1331  
(732) 350-2300

2373 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-3004  
(202) 225-3765

<http://chrissmith.house.gov>



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**DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION**

Lyme Disease Forum  
Wall Township, NJ Municipal Building  
Excerpts from U.S. Rep. Chris Smith  
June 2, 2010

After one of my town meetings here in Wall Township in 1992, Pat Smith approached me and asked for a sit-down on Lyme.

We met. We talked for hours. Let me amend that; Pat Smith talked for hours. And I listened, and learned and acted.

I remember thinking how impressed I was with Pat's knowledge and tenacity. And the need for meaningful action – especially since New Jersey was – and continues to be – among the most heavily impacted regions in the U.S. Lyme, the “great pretender,” often evades detection.

So for almost 20 years, I have been working on Lyme and other vector-borne diseases.

Interestingly, my work with Lyme parallels my legislative advocacy with Autism. Both initiatives started with a constituent ringing the alarm, and the need for research and aggressive action.

In both cases, I introduced comprehensive legislation, and founded and chaired a bipartisan congressional caucus.

With autism, we've had tremendous success. My Centers of Excellence bill is law, and research funding has skyrocketed and I hope and pray is making a difference.

With Lyme, as Pat Smith predicted, we have been met at every turn with gross ignorance, vexing indifference or overt hostility.

The flat earth society tells us chronic Lyme doesn't really exist and conflicts of interest seem to have had undue influence in disease definition writing.

For the better part of a decade, I've introduced comprehensive legislation—HR 1179, The Lyme & Tick Borne Disease Prevention Education & Research Act—with 91 co-sponsors.

The bill would authorize \$20 million a year for five years on new research and establish an advisory committee to bring real input and scrutiny to this vexing and misunderstood disease.

Last year, after countless setbacks, we achieved modest success.

Working with (Congressman) Frank Wolf (R-VA) & David Obey (D-WI) we won enactment of policy derived from my bill to fund grants on long term complications related to Lyme, and grants for more sensitive and accurate diagnostic methods and kits for Lyme.

We won an expansion of epidemiological research, and expansion of surveillance and reporting and preventive research for tick-borne disease in several regions of the country.

Tonight, it is a privilege to host an exemplary panel of experts, men and women, who have been the pioneers in helping those affected with Lyme by employing best medical practice and by calling for an end to a culture of denial on Lyme.

People suffering the devastating and debilitating consequences of Lyme and other vector-borne diseases deserve no less.