WHEREAS, Lyme Disease can be cured if detected and diagnosed early and if treatment is administered in the very early stages of disease offers the highest potential for therapeutic effect; and

WHEREAS, Lyme Disease shares a number of symptoms with COVID-19, including fever, achiness and chills; and

WHEREAS, Current diagnostic laboratory tests for Lyme Disease are available but are not yet 100% accurate; and

WHEREAS, Lyme Disease shares a number of symptoms with COVID-19, including fever, achiness and chills; and

WHEREAS, Anyone who mistakes Lyme disease for COVID-19 could unknowingly delay necessary medical treatment; and

WHEREAS, Delays in the treatment of Lyme disease can lead to more severe and persistent symptoms that are much more difficult to treat including neurological and cognitive problems, potentially fatal heart problems and painful arthritis; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 37.5 of title 5 provides for insurance coverage for the treatment of Lyme Disease; and

WHEREAS, Recent reports suggest that wildlife have become more bold, wandering into...
suburbs and cities where human and vehicle traffic are reduced because of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, White-tailed deer, prevalent in Rhode Island, are an important host to multiple human biting tick species; and

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) classifies Rhode Island as a High Incidence State for Lyme Disease; and

WHEREAS, Awareness is a key component of preventing and treating tick-borne disease; and

WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Department of Health provides online information for patients as well as diagnostic information and treatment protocols for physicians regarding Lyme Disease and other tick-borne diseases on its website, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island respectfully requests that:

1. The Rhode Island Department of Health (the "Department") solicit public service announcements designed to increase awareness of the activities that expose people to ticks, inform the public as to current best practices for protection against tick bites as well as the symptoms of Lyme Disease and the importance of early detection and timely treatment; and

2. That the Department regularly advise physicians to consider the possibility of tick-borne disease in their patients especially noting the prevalence of ticks in Rhode Island and the potential overlap in symptoms with COVID-19; and

3. That the Department regularly advise physicians of the resources available on their website for diagnosis and treatment of Lyme Disease, the importance of early diagnosis and early treatment and the latest treatment protocol for proper implementation of RIGL chapter 37.5 of title 5; and

4. That the Department update their findings, website information, data and physician protocols with regard to early detection, diagnosis and treatment of Lyme Disease and other tick-borne illnesses based on current data from the CDC and other reliable sources when new information is discovered or new protocols developed but at least yearly; and

5. That the Department notify physicians when findings and treatment protocols have been updated; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Director Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH,

Rhode Island Department of Health.