

Insurance and Real Estate Committee  
Public Hearing Testimony- February 3, 2009

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**SB 458: AN ACT REQUIRING COMMUNICATION OF MAMMOGRAPHIC  
BREAST DENSITY INFORMATION TO PATIENTS**

Good Afternoon Chairman Crisco, Chairman Fontana and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. My name is Julie Stenz and I would like to take this opportunity to urge support for **SB 458: AN ACT REQUIRING COMMUNICATION OF MAMMOGRAPHIC BREAST DENSITY INFORMATION TO PATIENTS.**

Over the past three years I have served as Connecticut's lead advocacy volunteer representing the American Cancer Society. In my role I have met with cancer survivors, caregivers, and vocal advocates that have shared their heart felt stories regarding the battles that they have waged and witnessed with this disease. As I sit here today, I have two close friends who are recovering from double-mastectomies and awaiting information about their prognosis and need for further treatment.

The American Cancer Society recommends yearly mammography for all women over 40 as part of a good breast health plan. Yearly mammography helps to detect breast cancer at its earliest stages when there are better chances for survival. However, for many women with dense breast tissue, a routine mammogram is not enough. An ultrasound is necessary to detect whether a tumor is present.

Approximately two-thirds of premenopausal women have dense breasts. In postmenopausal women, about one-quarter have dense breasts. In a recent study, 80 percent of the tumors found by using the combination method of ultrasound and mammography were in stages zero or one, when the prognosis for recovery is good. Using a combination of mammography and ultrasound to screen women with dense breast tissue might result in earlier and more frequent detection of breast cancer, ultimately saving more lives. I am pleased that this bill would cover a comprehensive ultrasound screening when dense breast tissue is found. This requirement is not to underestimate any doctor's abilities to properly detect the presence of a tumor, but rather to assure that the proper diagnosis is made as early as possible, further helping to save lives.

I am pleased that this bill also covers information given to patients regarding dense tissue. I have met many women that have dense breast tissue and are not properly informed of this occurrence. In those situations it is understandable that some people may become upset with the lack of information given by their doctor. This legislation corrects that. The most effective tool for individuals receiving preventative cancer screenings is information. I have met many survivors and caregivers that have relied on information from their doctors

regarding their health status as a comforting measure to help them during their difficult time.

Please support SB 458 and the protection and defense it provides to preventing breast cancer. The majority of us are educated on breast cancer and the preventive measures we can take, but science has evolved, and now there are more effective tools used to detect cancer and have the potential to save lives.

Please help us to protect ourselves and become properly informed.