

Mary Ann Wasil Nilan
Milford, CT

Good afternoon Senator Crisco, Representative Fontana and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee.

My name is Mary Ann Wasil Nilan, I am a 45 year old mother of three and a 6 year breast cancer survivor. I am the Executive Director & Founder of the non-profit Get In Touch Foundation, educating girls in grades 5-12 on the importance of and how to do a breast self exam.

On **February 4th 2004** I discovered a lump on my left breast.

On **February 5th** I had a negative mammogram and an ultrasound.

On **February 6th** the radiologist told me not to worry, my age and family history meant it was probably nothing, let's watch it for a year.

On **February 6th** I disregarded that advice and made an appointment with a surgeon.

On **February 16th** I had a surgical biopsy.

On **February 17th** I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

On **March 30th** I had a lumpectomy and sentinel node biopsy.

On **April 2nd** I was told my breast was full of cancer, it was in my lymph nodes and I was diagnosed with stage II invasive ductal carcinoma.

After a month of baseline testing, I began my chemotherapy treatments on **May 5th**, affectionately known in our home as "Chemo de Mayo."

On **May 7th** I turned 40 and shaved my head.

On **June 16th** I suffered a stroke during my 4th chemotherapy treatment.

On **June 17th** I was diagnosed with a "patent foramen ovale," a hole in the left atrium of my heart, and told by my oncologist that my breast cancer saved my life.

On **June 29th** I had a trans-catheter closure to repair the hole in my heart.

On **July 7th** I resumed my chemotherapy treatments.

On **August 18th** I had my last chemo.

On **October 13th** I had a bi-lateral mastectomy and began reconstruction.

On **October 22nd** I was told the cancer had been in both of my breasts.

One thousand nine hundred thirty six days ago I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

The technology, the medicine, the remarkable tests, procedures, drugs and research that have been done and are currently being done have all been instrumental in making me well again, and will continue to keep me well.

I am one of the lucky ones.

Lucky to have health insurance.

Lucky to have a top-notch healing team of doctors and nurses.

The Third College Edition of Webster's New World Dictionary defines "luck" as:

...the seemingly chance happening of events which affect one; fortune; lot; fate.

The proper and necessary tests and procedures – a woman's health - should not be dependent on luck.

In closing, I would like to suggest this analogy to you:

We have all taken our families on road trips and prepared our vehicles by filling our gas tanks, checking the oil level, and assuring adequate tire pressure. We do this because we want to arrive safely at our destination. We do all that we can; we do not rely on "luck."

This proposed bill is an "equipment check" for a woman who deserves to arrive safely at her destination – life.

We must do all that we can, so that she does not have to rely on "luck."

Hope Lives!

Thank you.