



March 3, 2016

Re: Testimony of Nancy M. Cappello, Ph.D.  
96 Rowley Road, Woodbury CT 06798  
Support of SB 158

Senator Joe Crisco, Representative Robert Megna and Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

My name is Nancy Cappello and I am founder and director of two nonprofit organizations, Are You Dense, Inc. and Are You Dense Advocacy, Inc. I testify today in support of Senate Bill 158 with the substitute language.

Connecticut is recognized as the global leader in early detection and dense breast tissue education and advocacy because of the life-saving work of this committee.

In 2004, I was diagnosed with advanced stage breast cancer within weeks of my 11<sup>th</sup> normal mammogram. My later stage cancer, which had metastasized to 13 lymph nodes, was detected, once palpable, at my annual exam. Shocked that it wasn't until AFTER my advanced cancer diagnosis, when I asked why my mammogram did not find my cancer, I was told that my extremely dense breast tissue masked my cancer on my mammogram for years. Searching the scientific journals about this 'dense tissue,' I was outraged to discover a decade of research, now 2 decades old, concluding that, 40% of women have dense breast tissue, as the density of the breast increases, the reliability of the mammogram plummets and an adjunct ultrasound significantly increases the detection of early invasive cancer in women with dense breast tissue.

Armed with science, I went back to my TEAM of doctors and asked them to begin reporting a woman's breast density in her mammography report so she can have the same information that her doctors have. They refused, stating it was not the standard of practice.

Compelled to not allow these rejections to stand in the way of other Connecticut women, faithful in their yearly mammograms, to suffer the tragedy of an advanced cancer, my husband Joe contacted Senator Hartley. Her response, during one of the most difficult and dark times of my life, gave me hope.

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Through the pioneering leadership of Senators Hartley and Crisco and this committee, Connecticut became the first state in the nation in 2005 to mandate insurance coverage for adjunct ultrasound for women with dense breast tissue. In 2009, after lots of opposition and drama, Connecticut passed another FIRST law in the nation to disclose dense breast tissue to the patient through the mammography report. Since that watershed moment, 24 states have followed Connecticut's lead and 11 states have introduced bills this session. From Tokyo, Japan, to Toledo, Ohio, Connecticut's global impact for early detection is esteemed.

However, we have more work to do to protect every Connecticut woman from the tragedy of later stage cancer. Connecticut data conclude that more than 60% of women are NOT having the recommended adjunct ultrasound screening as their deductible must be exhausted FIRST before being 'covered.'

Illinois passed similar legislation to not impose a deductible for ultrasound screening in 2009, by using our 2005/06 law as a model – but took it much further.

I ask you to support SB 158, with the substitute language, reducing the financial barrier to adjunct screening ultrasound and giving every Connecticut woman access to an early diagnosis, eliminating the grief of a later stage cancer, and, for some, death from this disease.

**Proposed Substitute Language**

**Senate Bill 158: AN ACT CONCERNING COST-SHARING FOR MAMMOGRAMS AND BREAST  
ULTRASOUNDS.**

- REMOVE exception for high deductible plans