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# California State Senate



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## **Fact Sheet: Senate Bill 173 (Simitian)** *Breast Cancer Detection and Prevention*

### **Summary**

Senate Bill 173 requires that women receive information about their breast density on their federally required mammography report if a woman has dense breast tissue (DBT).

### **Need for the bill**

The National Cancer institute estimates that one in eight women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime. Women with DBT are at four to six times greater risk of developing breast cancer compared to women of the same age and health. More than half of women have DBT. Because DBT is white on a mammogram and cancer is white on a mammogram, 75 percent of cancer is missed in women with DBT by mammography alone according to a January 2011 study from the Mayo Clinic.

A recent national survey found that 95 percent of women do not know their breast density, and nearly 90 percent do not know that breast density increases the risk of developing breast cancer. Compounding the problem is the fact that doctors have spoken to fewer than one in ten women (nine percent) about breast density.<sup>1</sup>

The state of Connecticut has passed a similar law, Congress and the states of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, Florida, and Texas all have similar legislation pending.

Senate Bill 173 will lead to more women surviving breast cancer by helping us catch cancer early when it is most treatable and curable.

1. Harris Interactive survey May 20, 2010

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