

California State Senate



SENATOR
S. JOSEPH SIMITIAN
ELEVENTH SENATE DISTRICT

Fact Sheet: Senate Bill 791 (Simitian) *Breast Cancer Patient Information*

Summary

Senate Bill 791 requires that women receive information about their breast density on their federally required mammography report if a woman has dense breast tissue (DBT).

The bill received unanimous support 9-0 and 16-0 in Assembly Business and Professions and Assembly Health respectively. There were six amendments taken in the Assembly that removed the opposition of the California Radiological Society and the California Association of Physician Groups (CAPG).

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. According to the National Cancer institute the main reason a mammogram fails to detect cancer that is present is DBT.

A recent national survey found that 95 percent of women do not know their breast density. Compounding the problem is the fact that doctors have spoken to fewer than one in ten women (nine percent) about breast density.

Senate Bill 791 will lead to more women surviving breast cancer by helping us catch cancer early when it is most treatable and curable.