



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

## Senator Flanagan Announces Major Breast Cancer Prevention Enhancement Passes Both Senate And Assembly

JOHN J. FLANAGAN June 19, 2012

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In a major victory in his three-year battle to enhance women's ability to protect themselves against breast cancer, Senator John J. Flanagan (2nd Senate District) announced that legislation he sponsored to assist in the fight against breast cancer has passed the Senate and the Assembly. The legislation will provide women with dense breasts the information they need to make decisions regarding their health care.

The measure, which is sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblymember Ellen Jaffee (95th District), would require that every mammography report given to a patient with dense breast tissue inform the women in plain, non-technical language that she has dense breast tissue and that she should discuss the potential benefit of further screenings with her physician.

"The impact of breast density on the healthcare decisions of women throughout our state is undeniable but the necessary information they need remains hidden from many. The passage and enactment of this legislation will raise awareness of the impact that breast density can have on diagnosing breast cancer, give women a greater ability to make educated decisions about their own health and, simply put, save lives. I am proud to work with

Assemblywoman Jaffee to enact this legislation this year,” stated Senator Flanagan.

According to leading medical studies, breast cancer is four to six times more likely in women with dense breast tissue, and mammograms fail to detect approximately 40% to 50% of tumors in dense tissue since this condition obscures their presence. In spite of those facts, a recent Harris Interactive survey found that 95% of women do not know their breast density even though it is a risk factor, and less than one-in-ten women learn about breast density from their physician.

Senator Flanagan’s efforts in passing this legislation began after he was contacted by JoAnn Pushkin of Dix Hills, a breast cancer survivor-turned-advocate and Executive Director of Are You Dense Advocacy, Inc.

Ms. Pushkin’s cancer went undiagnosed for five years as her annual mammograms were unable to detect a tumor due to her dense breast tissue. She has become one of the leaders in the effort to bring awareness to this issue and has worked with Senator Flanagan and Assemblymember Jaffee in gaining passage of this legislation. She also continues to advocate for it to become law not only in New York State but also in 12 other states as well as at the federal level.

“JoAnn has been a leader in the effort to help provide the women across our state and across our nation with a greater ability to protect themselves from breast cancer. She has turned a situation that has caused much personal strife to her and her family into a crusade to help her fellow New Yorkers and I thank her for her efforts. Hopefully, she is fully aware of the impact her work will have on the health futures of so many other women in our state,” added Senator Flanagan.

“This victory, fought hard for by advocates with the tireless support of Senator Flanagan and Assemblywoman Jaffee, is about a woman’s right to be informed of details of her breast health history so she can advocate for herself. I was not as fortunate and have worked to prevent my tragedy from taking a seat at anyone else's kitchen table. I, along with the 40% of New York women with dense breast tissue, am grateful to Senate and Assembly members for voting in support of the protection of women,” said Ms. Pushkin.

Currently, Connecticut, Texas, and Virginia are the only states in the nation with Breast Density Inform laws; 13 other states have introduced legislation that would establish such statutes, as has the U.S. House of Representatives.

The legislation will now be sent to Governor Andrew Cuomo for his action.

**PLEASE [CLICK HERE](#) TO VIEW VIDEO OF SENATOR FLANAGAN'S REMARKS ABOUT THIS LEGISLATION**

[Link to Senator Flanagan's Legislation](#)

[ARE YOU DENSE web site](#)

[Fact Sheet from ARE YOU DENSE](#)

[ARE YOU DENSE ADVOCACY web site \(Legislative Info\)](#)

[ARE YOU DENSE Facebook page](#)

[SUSAN G. KOMEN FOR THE CURE web site](#)

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