



August 16, 2021

The Honorable Jon Tester  
311 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mazie K. Hirono  
109 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
141 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the *Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options for Veterans Act* (S. 2533)

Senator Tester, Senator Boozman, Senator Hirono, and Senator Collins:

Founded in 1995, the American Society of Breast Surgeons (ASBrS) is the primary leadership organization for surgeons who treat patients with breast cancer and benign breast related diseases. We are committed to continually improving the practice of breast surgery. Our mission is accomplished by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and by promoting education, research, and the development of advanced surgical techniques. ASBrS now has more than 3,100 members throughout the United States and in 35 countries around the world. Active membership is open to surgeons with a special interest in breast disease.

We write to express support for S. 2533, the *Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options for Veterans Act*, which would improve mammography services for patients covered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Among other things, the legislation would upgrade imaging technology at VA facilities, create a telemammography pilot program to reach veterans who live in areas without access, study the current availability and potential expansion of genetic screening and counseling for veterans, and improve access to mammograms for paralyzed and disabled veterans.

The provisions in S. 2533 acknowledge the fact that early diagnosis of breast cancer is key to survival. According to the American Cancer Society, if breast cancer is diagnosed when it is still localized, the five-year relative survival rate is 99%, compared to only 28% once the cancer has

spread to distant parts of the body, such as the liver or bones.<sup>1</sup> As these statistics indicate, it is difficult to overstate the critical importance of early diagnosis. Your legislation will ensure that more veterans will experience the benefit of these life-saving screenings.

ASBrS thanks you for your leadership on this issue. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help advance this important legislation. Additionally, if we can ever serve as a resource on breast cancer screening, diagnosis, or care, please do not hesitate to reach out to Sharon Grutman, Manager of Advocacy, Communications, and Quality Initiatives, at [sgrutman@breastsurgeons.org](mailto:sgrutman@breastsurgeons.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Margenthaler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie Margenthaler, MD, FACS  
President  
American Society of Breast Surgeons

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/understanding-a-breast-cancer-diagnosis/breast-cancer-survival-rates.html>