

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 18, 2009

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Office of the Governor
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

We write to express our grave concern about recently announced cuts to the *Every Woman Counts* program, California's breast cancer screening program for underserved women, which would deny services to women below the age of 50. We urge you to reconsider and rescind this change, and ensure that women at risk for this deadly disease can continue to get access to these critical, life-saving services.

We want to make you aware of recent action taken by the Senate to ensure women between the ages of 40 and 50 have coverage for yearly mammograms. On December 3rd, the Senate passed the Mikulski amendment to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which ensures that the Secretary of Health and Human Services would be in charge of determining which preventive health services women will have access to at no cost under health care reform. Secretary Sebelius has already pledged to ensure that plans cover yearly mammograms for women over 40.

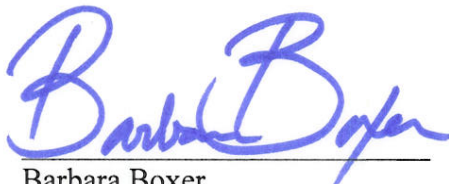
Breast cancer is a terrible disease. It is the most frequently diagnosed cancer among women, except for skin cancers, and the second leading cause of cancer deaths for women in the U.S. More than 190,000 women in the U.S. will have been diagnosed with breast cancer this year, and more than 40,000 will have died.

Early detection of breast cancer is a key to surviving the disease. The American Cancer Society estimates that women have a 98 percent survival rate when breast cancer is caught early, during stage I. That shrinks to about 84 percent during stages II and III, and to just 27 percent at stage IV — when cancer has reached its most advanced point.

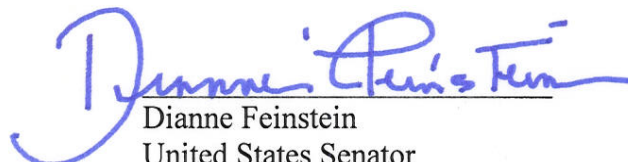
Unfortunately, women who are uninsured or underinsured — like those eligible for *Every Women Counts* — are more likely to skip potentially life-saving cancer screenings, leading to later diagnoses, larger tumors and lower survival rates. About 1.2 million women in California are eligible for free breast cancer screenings through the *Every Woman Counts* program — screenings that may save their lives. Without the help of programs like *Every Woman Counts*, most of these women will simply have nowhere else to go.

We urge you to rescind the change that denies access to this program for women age 40 to 49, and to ensure that all women in California who are at risk for this deadly disease can continue to get access to these important screenings.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator