



Protecting Women from Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is an epidemic in this country. One in every nine women will face breast cancer. Every three minutes, a woman is diagnosed, and every 13 minutes, a woman dies from the disease.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I can think of no better way to mark this month than to get the Assure Access to Mammography Act signed into law.

My two sisters both had breast cancer, and both died from the disease. Sadly, they developed breast cancer at a time when regular mammograms and improved treatment methods were not widely available.

A decade ago I looked into how much America spends on breast cancer and breast cancer research— I was astounded at just how small the investment was. Clearly, we weren't doing enough.

By working together with women, their families, and groups like the National Breast Cancer Coalition, we've been able to increase America's investment in lifesaving breast cancer research. This year, the federal government will invest almost ten times as much as we did a decade ago to find improved treatments, and one day, a cure for this deadly disease. I've been proud to help lead this effort as chairman of the Senate committee that funds virtually all federal breast cancer research.

We've also secured help in the fight against breast cancer from an unlikely source. In 1992, I offered an amendment to dedicate \$210 million in the Defense Department Budget for breast cancer research. This funding was in addition to the funding for breast cancer research conducted at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). My amendment passed and – overnight – it doubled federal funding for breast cancer. Since then, funding for breast cancer research has been included in the Defense Department Budget every year.

But our research success will be pointless if breakthroughs in diagnosis and treatment are not available for patients. That's why I recently introduced the Assure Access to Mammography Act. As you may know, the earlier a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer, the sooner she can begin to receive treatment and the more likely she will survive. While imperfect, mammograms are the best-known way to diagnose breast cancer and reduce mortality. Routine mammograms in clinical trials resulted in a 25-30% decrease in breast cancer mortality for women aged 50-70.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I can think of no better way to mark this month than to get the Assure Access to Mammography Act signed into law. The lives of thousands of women in Iowa and across America are depending on us.

If you have questions about breast cancer research and treatment or Breast Cancer Awareness Month, you can call the National Breast Cancer Coalition at 1-800-622-2838.