



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
PLASTIC SURGEONS®



THE PLASTIC SURGERY
FOUNDATION®

Executive Office

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May 18, 2018

The Honorable John Bel Edwards
Governor of Louisiana
P.O. Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

RE: Sign S.B. 556

Dear Governor Edwards:

I am writing on behalf of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) in strong support of S.B. 556. ASPS is the largest association of plastic surgeons in the world, representing more than 94 percent of all board-certified plastic surgeons in the United States – including 92 board-certified plastic surgeons in Louisiana. Our mission is to advance quality care for plastic surgery patients and promote public policy that protects patient safety.

S.B. 556 will increase awareness among patients about the availability of breast reconstruction and prostheses provided under the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998 (WHCRA). According to the American Cancer Society, it's estimated that among U.S. women and men there will be 268,670 new cases of invasive breast cancer and 41,400 breast cancer deaths in 2018. Federal law has required health plans that offer breast cancer coverage to provide coverage for breast reconstruction and prostheses since the passage of the WHCRA. However, a large gap remains between the number of women who require mastectomy and those who are offered breast reconstruction surgery. ASPS studies have shown that seven in 10 women are not fully informed about their breast reconstruction options prior to undergoing mastectomy.

A law similar to S.B. 556 was passed by the New York legislature in 2010, and the subsequent results have demonstrated a clear pattern of success. The New York State Breast Cancer Provider Discussion Law has led to a significant change in reconstructive rates since its passage, with reconstruction rates in New York surging from 49 percent in 2008 to 60 percent in 2014 (the national average was 32.3 percent in 2014). Furthermore – when looking at reconstruction rates before and after the law's passage – African Americans experienced the largest change in breast reconstruction rate, with an increase of 25 percent. This was followed closely by Asians with an 18 percent increase and Caucasians with a 12 percent increase. The surge in reconstruction following enactment of the New York law shows that a significant number of women – especially minority women – were truly inadequately informed prior to 2010. Patient education – which is central to patient safety – made a difference in this case and women who were informed post-passage of the law made different choices than they would have without education about breast reconstruction.

This legislation will help empower women to make the best care choices for their unique circumstances by ensuring that they are properly educated on all available care options. We hope to provide breast cancer patients in Louisiana with the quality and depth of care that they deserve. For the reasons outlined above, we urge you to sign S.B. 556. Please do not hesitate to contact Patrick Hermes, Director of Advocacy and Government Relations, at phermes@plasticsurgery.org or (847) 228-3331 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey E. Janis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a distinct "E" and "Janis" following.

Jeffrey E. Janis, MD, FACS
President, American Society of Plastic Surgeons