



Chairman's Opening Remarks

December 3rd Hearing

"The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging will now come to order.

Today's hearing is meant to bring attention to an incredibly important issue for so many of America's seniors, especially as we move into the holiday season.

We are here to focus on how to best serve older Americans who want to spend their senior years in the comfort of their own homes.

And while there are so many positives about aging in place that we'll highlight today, we are also here to shine a light on the often-unreported crisis of isolation and loneliness.

We should be doing everything possible to support seniors who strive to age in place, and today we'll be focusing on how Congress can get the Older Americans Act, known as the OAA, passed to reauthorize that many critical programs that support seniors with this goal.

Last week we celebrated Thanksgiving and later this month families across America will be celebrating Hannukah and Christmas. For many of us that means spending time with family and loved ones.

While these moments are a time to cherish time with loved ones, they can also be a difficult reminder of loss for older Americans who no longer have the ability to spend the holidays with their friends, spouse, or even their children.

We all know the importance of taking care of our seniors, for many older Americans who choose to age in place our goal should always be to help them have the best possible care and support. They should always have the opportunity to remain in the home and neighborhoods they love.

This is why community, strong families, faith-based organizations, volunteers, and OAA programs are so important to our aging population, especially during this time of the year.

In my home state of Florida, there are many seniors who cannot travel during the holiday season. Thankfully, many communities have the resources to give our seniors the care and attention they deserve.

Combatting the feeling of isolation and loneliness for our aging community has endless benefits – from better mental and physical health to stronger, multigenerational relationships with families and communities.

We can all agree that community matters. Strong families, faith-based organizations, volunteers, and the programs supported by the OAA create the foundation that allows older Americans who chose to age in place remain in the homes and neighborhoods they love.

That's why supporting the successful programs made possible by the OAA and showing how faith-based groups, nonprofits, and service organizations strengthen families is so important to the work of this committee.

During the holidays, when both loneliness and the demand for caregiving rise, these supports become even more critical.

Aging in place is good for families, communities, and taxpayers.

Strengthening these programs is a bipartisan commitment to dignity, independence, and the American way of life.

For 60 years, the OAA has helped innumerable seniors by promoting social connection and life-affirming support programs. Over 10 million older Americans a year are helped by programs covered by the OAA.

The OAA continues to serve as the backbone of many assistance programs that help ensure older adults can age in place with dignity.

I am proud to work with Ranking Member Gillibrand, and Health Education, Labor and Pensions Chairman Cassidy and Ranking Member Sanders to fight for the reauthorization of this important piece of legislation, which is a critical tool in our arsenal to fight against neglect and abuse of our elderly population.

We are working with the Trump administration, who understands the value of many of these programs.

I'm grateful we have a leader in the White House and a leader at the Department of Health and Human Services who prioritize the safety and health of older Americans and are partners in this fight to ensure members of our aging community have a healthy and fulfilling life.

I am also working to pass bipartisan legislation to create a non-refundable tax credit aimed at adult children who provide certain care for their parents or older relatives in multigenerational homes.

My hope is that with this hearing, we can examine how strong community networks help older adults age in place, especially during the holiday season when isolation, caregiver stress, and multigenerational pressures peak."

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