



Chairman's Opening Remarks September 3rd Hearing

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

We are proud of the bipartisan history of the Special Committee on Aging, and to maintain that tradition in this Congress, today's hearing will be led by Ranking Member Gillibrand.

We've gathered to discuss a very important topic, not just for our aging community, but also for generations planning for retirement and for those who won't be retiring for several decades.

Today's hearing will focus on the value of our older Americans in the workplace, and what we can do as elected officials to help protect and foster a purpose-filled life for our aging constituents.

I look forward to a discussion today on how we fight against age discrimination by highlighting the positive impact of older Americans' engagement in their communities and how aging Americans who remain engaged create benefits for themselves and our economy.

I want to be clear about something: age discrimination isn't just wrong, it's stupid. I built businesses, and I can tell you that looking at someone's age instead of the value they bring to an organization makes zero sense. You can't run a business or government that way and we need to make sure it's not happening to American seniors.

Work provides purpose and fulfillment. These are powerful forces that enrich families, strengthen communities, and support the health and longevity of our nation and its people.

Having a purpose is an essential part of the American Dream, and it has long been an indicator of both mental and physical well-being across all age groups.

Research shows that older adults who remain engaged, experience greater physical health, mental resilience, and life satisfaction.

And employing older workers is good for businesses too, because these folks have years of wisdom, the ability to mentor the next generation of leaders, and a valuable perspective on issues leaders in business and government face every day.

To be clear, not every older American wants to stay in the workforce. Finding purpose will look different for each person. For some, it will be taking a class or a course to explore an area of interest, volunteering in the community, or dedicating time to pursue a new hobby.

But for many seniors, purpose will be found in continuing to work in some capacity. This could be in their previous business, as a new part-time employee at a place they enjoy frequenting, or even branching out and starting something new.

We need to make sure Americans of all ages have the opportunity to work and pursue their dreams by stopping age discrimination and removing the red tape and barriers that hamper or discourage older Americans from continuing work or starting new businesses or careers.

We did this in Florida when I was governor. By cutting taxes and costly and unnecessary regulations, we managed to turn the economy around, making it a beacon for businesses and those wanting a full and purposeful life.

During my eight years as governor, we cut taxes more than 100 times and slashed more than 5,000 burdensome regulations. We cut the time it took to get your license or permit from the state of Florida from weeks to days.

Florida businesses added 1.7 million jobs, we paid down more than \$10 billion of our debt, and we increased the efficiency of government to provide additional services for our citizens and our state, including for our seniors. Many moved to Florida because there are better business opportunities there.

Because of these policies, Florida is well known as a place that thousands of retirees' flock to every year, escaping less financially hostile climates. In Florida, their dollars go further, and they have communities and opportunities to experience connection and fulfillment without the fear of age discrimination.

I want to thank my colleague, Ranking Member Gillibrand for her focus on this important topic and look forward to a productive and meaningful conversation."

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