

**Opening Statement of Senator Herb Kohl
Special Committee on Aging Hearing
The Way Forward: An Update from the Alzheimer's Study Group
March 25, 2009**

Good morning. Today we will continue the discussion we began last May concerning Alzheimer's disease and the crisis facing our nation. At that time, two members of the Alzheimer's Study Group, Justice O'Connor and Speaker Gingrich, outlined plans to create a blueprint for tackling the largest problems associated with the disease. Today, along with Senator Bob Kerrey, they will outline their National Strategic Plan to identify, examine, and mitigate Alzheimer's greatest challenges. We are happy to have them back, and grateful to them for bringing attention to this issue.

The Committee has recently put forth several policy initiatives that complement the recommendations made in the Study Group's report. Senators Lincoln, Wyden, and Casey joined me in introducing the Retooling the Health Care Workforce for an Aging America Act, which would address our nation's health care workforce shortage, and provide support to the 44 million Americans who are caring for a family member, including those with dementia. My colleague Senator Martinez and I also have a bill called the National Silver Alert Act. Similar to the successful "Amber Alert" for children, the Silver Alert enables families and local, state, and federal law enforcement to quickly coordinate a search when a senior with Alzheimer's or dementia has wandered away from home.

In addition to members of the Alzheimer's Study Group, we are pleased to welcome Maria Shriver and Larry Butcher, who have been tireless advocates on behalf of both their own family members and the millions of Americans living with the disease. Ms. Shriver is accompanied today by her father, Sargent Shriver, founder of the Peace Corps. Mr. Shriver is a great American who has spent a lifetime in service of his country. Thank you for being here.

I now turn to Ranking Member Martinez for his opening statement.