



UNITED STATES SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON

AGING

RANKING MEMBER KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND

March 12th, 2025

Ranking Member Kirsten Gillibrand's Opening Statement “*Breaking the Cycle of Senior Loneliness: Strengthening Family and Community Support*”

Thank you, Chairman Scott, for calling today's hearing.

Imagine growing old alone by yourself, with no friends, no family, or no loved ones around. I've seen it before, and it's really lonely.

It's the reality of many of our seniors today. A heartbreaking 1 in 4 older Americans report being socially isolated and 43 percent report feeling lonely.

Loneliness and social isolation have detrimental consequences, increasing risk of early death, chronic disease, and dementia.

This is not the kind of life we want for our loved ones, this is not the kind of life we want for ourselves.

The good news is, there are many things we can do to reduce loneliness, and prevent isolation.

For example, home and congregate meals deliver both life-sustaining nutrition and social connection for older adults in their homes and community.

Transportation programs allow adults with limited mobility to participate in community and in social activities.

There are also various innovative programs, such as intergenerational initiatives, that can help reduce social isolation.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to support and strengthen programs that do reduce loneliness and social isolation for older adults.

This includes protecting and strengthening critical federal funding for these programs, including the Older Americans Act.

I am proud to lead and support efforts to increase funding for the Older Americans Act programs, including its nutrition programs.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about all the ways we can help seniors stay connected and integrated in their communities.