



SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Chairman Bob Casey

Chairman Bob Casey's Opening Statement
"Taking Aim at Alzheimer's: Frontline Perspectives and Caregiver Challenges"
May 20, 2021

Good morning everyone. The Senate Special Committee on Aging will come to order. First and foremost, I want to welcome all of the advocates from the Alzheimer's Association who are watching from home. This committee is privileged to host this hearing every year in partnership with the Association. I especially remember Senator Collins working so hard to make sure this hearing happened every year when she was Chair. Today's hearing takes place as families across the Nation continue on a long journey to heal from the horrors of this pandemic. We cannot forget the dreadful impact of COVID-19. No community, no family was spared, and more than 587,000 lives have been lost in the United States. Through the American Rescue Plan, working families have more money in their pockets, our children are returning to school safely and everyone who wants to can be vaccinated. Just last week, the Biden Administration announced guidance to carry forward new funding for home and community-based services. This funding can bring a measure of relief to millions of families, including those with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. President Biden's Jobs Plan includes policies to help Americans who have dementia, to help their families and the workers who care for them. We know that Alzheimer's disease is an unforgiving and cruel condition. That might be an understatement. This affects over 6 million Americans, including in my

home state of Pennsylvania, 280,000 people. At today's hearing, our witnesses will testify about the hardships of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. We will hear about the debilitating and progressive nature of this awful disease and the terrible toll it takes on family caregivers. I am pleased to lead the effort here in the Senate every year to advocate for more research funding at the National Institutes of Health. But we have a long way to go to focus on this issue. We will also hear today about, as I mentioned, home and community-based services, which provides of course a lifeline for millions of American families. More than 3.5 million Americans, including adults with dementia, rely on services like help with groceries and shopping, or bathing or household work in order to stay healthy, to stay safe and independent for as long as possible. I've heard from Pennsylvanians across our Commonwealth, including dementia caregivers, about how important home and community-based services are to families. We're blessed today to have a great panel of witnesses. From my home state of Pennsylvania, from Lancaster County, Katelyn Montanez, who will share her powerful story. Katelyn's story and those like hers compel us, compel us to invest in these services. The President's plan will help bring long overdue help to families who struggle day in and day out to care for their family members, their friends, and their neighbors. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about all these issues today. But before we begin I want to remind Committee Members and witnesses to please keep your remarks and questions to five minutes. The countdown timer can be viewed alongside the other participant windows on WebEx. Following opening remarks, Senators will ask their questions based on seniority, and I ask that Members have their cameras turned on a few minutes prior to their questions. To Ranking Member Scott, I am pleased to turn it over to you for your opening remarks.