

Opening Statement  
Senator Susan Collins  
*“Alzheimer’s and Other Cognitive Diseases: An Arizona Perspective”*  
November 1, 2019

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Good morning. It is a pleasure to be here in Arizona with my colleague, Senator Martha McSally, to convene this field hearing of the Senate Committee on Aging. Senator McSally has been a valued and active member of the Aging Committee. Her commitments and contributions to the committee’s work are many, and today’s hearing is a testament to Senator McSally’s work to advance research and care for families facing Alzheimer’s disease.

Alzheimer’s disease is one of the greatest public health priorities not only to seniors here in

**Grand Canyon State, but also throughout our nation.**

**As the founder and co-chair of the Congressional Alzheimer's Task Force in the Senate, this is an issue that is particularly important to me. Many families in the United States, including mine, have been touched by Alzheimer's. Nearly 5.8 million Americans are living with the disease, including 140,000 in Arizona. Your state has the fastest growth rate in the country for Alzheimer's diagnoses, with the prevalence expected to grow by 43 percent in the next six years.**

**In addition to the human suffering it causes, Alzheimer's is the most expensive disease.**

**Alzheimer's costs our nation an astonishing \$290 billion a year, including \$195 billion in costs to Medicare and Medicaid. If we continue along this trajectory, Alzheimer's is projected to claim the minds of nearly 14 million seniors and surpass \$1 trillion in annual costs by 2050.**

**It takes a tremendous toll on families, too. Last year family caregivers provided 18.5 billion hours of care for loved ones with dementia. It's often a 24/7 job that imposes a toll on our caregivers.**

**With increased federal investments and public private partnerships, we are beginning to see hope. Last year, I worked to secure the largest funding increase for Alzheimer's in history, bringing us to a total of \$2.34 billion. Through advances in our understanding of the brain and imaging technologies, scientists, physicians, and pharmaceutical companies are able to conduct clinical trials that never would have been possible even just a few years ago. This investment will lead to progress, including new research that I look forward to learning about today.**

**Again, I am delighted to join you today. I will now turn the gavel officially over to my friend and colleague, Senator Martha McSally.**