



December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025

## Ranking Member Kirsten Gillibrand's Opening Statement

### *"Aging in Place: The Impact of Community During the Holidays"*

*Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for calling today's hearing. Thank you to our witnesses. Thank you for being here.*

*The holidays are when communities come together. Whether you celebrate with family or loved ones, sharing this heartfelt season with the people you love makes all the difference in the world.*

*However, building and participating in one's community is a year-round endeavor and one that can pose unique challenges for older adults and people with disabilities. The most important mechanism that enables this kind of participation is home and community-based services, or HCBS. HCBS is almost exclusively available through Medicaid, and the availability of services is tied to federal funding.*

*Our witnesses today will discuss the importance of these programs and how they allow older adults and people with disabilities to live in their communities—their overwhelming preference to institutional care.*

*With this in mind, I am pleased to enter more than six hundred statements from people, families, and organizations about the impact of HCBS for older adults and people with disabilities into the Congressional Record.*

*Our witnesses will also discuss the importance of including these populations in decision-making processes that directly impact them. This is why, today I'm reintroducing my Strategic Plan for Aging Act. This bill will help states create multi-sectoral plans for aging, including those who are aging with a disability, while ensuring the needs, preferences, and views of the people directly impacted are prioritized in the development and implementation of a plan.*

*I'm especially proud to introduce this bill today on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. People with disabilities should always be included in decisions about their lives, health, and well-being. I look forward to the discussion about my Strategic Plan for Aging Act that will help create inclusive and effective state plans.*

*Thank you, Mr. Chairman.*