



Chairman Rick Scott's Opening Remarks March 25, 2026 Hearing

"The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging will now come to order.

In December, this Committee [highlighted](#) the positive impact having a purpose and engaging with the community has on older Americans.

Witnesses shared powerful testimonies and firsthand accounts about how staying engaged – whether through volunteering, mentoring, or taking on new responsibilities – helped them live a happier, healthier life with a renewed purpose and goal for their next chapter.

Not only is this kind of activity enriching and beneficial to seniors, but it also helps their communities, too.

Witnesses spoke about the many, MANY ways older Americans strengthen the U.S. economy thanks to the expertise and perspective they bring to the job.

The truth is that retirement doesn't have to be the end of one's career. For many, it's the start of a new, purpose-driven chapter in their lives.

Seniors can and SHOULD use this time to chase and reach new goals and dreams.

Maybe try that new hobby they haven't had time for in the past, start a business doing odd jobs around their neighborhood, volunteer at their church, or even substitute teach at their grandkids' school!

In all of these things and more, seniors offer valuable insight because they have lived a life full of experiences and knowledge that can be passed on to the next generation.

However, in that hearing witnesses ALSO shared some of the challenges members of our aging community face when those goals and dreams involve continuing to work, or even going BACK to work, either full or part-time.

In today's hearing, we'll look more closely at what these challenges are and how government is making it worse...

The fact is, there are laws on the books that penalize older workers unfairly.

The Retirement Earnings Test is one of them.

This test punishes workers between the ages of 62-66 who start to claim their benefits – benefits they are entitled to and have earned. It essentially takes away \$1 of their benefits for every \$2 in benefits they earn once their income hits \$24,000 a year.

The Retirement Earnings Test was passed during the Great Depression, SPECIFICALLY to push older Americans out of the workforce and free up more jobs for younger Americans.

But as we are all aware – it's not the 1930's anymore, and we shouldn't expect our seniors to be punished today by outdated policies passed then.

Aging Americans deserve better. That's why I've introduced the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 2026.

This bill will get rid of the unfair Retirement Earnings Test so that seniors who want to stay in the workforce can do so without being punished or robbed of their hard-earned benefits.

But we need to do more than that. Even if we get the RET repealed, seniors still face mountains of administrative red tape to get information on how WHEN they retire impacts their benefits.

This same red tape also makes it hard for seniors to decide when they should start withdrawing their benefits – many Americans don't realize that WHEN they start withdrawing can actually impact how much they'll be entitled to!

This not only affects our seniors retiring today, but ALL Americans who are actively planning for their future.

We shouldn't be making it difficult for our seniors – or FUTURE seniors – to find the information they need to make the best choices for themselves and their families! We should be making it easy, straightforward, and transparent so all Americans can make the best decisions as they plan for retirement.

That is why I cosponsored the Claiming Age Clarity Act, which also has the support of two of my colleagues on this committee, Ranking Member Gillibrand and Senator Warnock. This bill would give seniors better and more straightforward information

about how their Social Security benefits change based on when they retire and when they start claiming their hard-earned benefits.

The fact is, workers age 55 or older have been the fastest-growing age group in the labor force for more than two decades.

In 1994, they made up just 10% of the workforce. In 2022, they made up 24%!

People are living longer, staying healthier, and wanting to keep working and giving back to their communities and pursuing new goals and challenges.

If our seniors want to stay at work, we should be empowering them and giving them all the information they need so they know what that means for their future!

It is not government's job to tell Americans when they should stop working and when they should claim their benefits.

And it's definitely not the government's role to punish those who want to continue their careers later in life.

Government should be working FOR our aging population, not against it.

We should be providing them with transparent information and ample freedom to choose what is best for them.

We should not penalize hardworking Americans for continuing to work after they reach retirement age.

Because at the end of the day, it's older Americans who bring the experience and expertise necessary to get the job done!

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about how we can get government out of the way, inject transparency, and make sure seniors have the information and freedom they need to make their later years their best years."

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