



Chairman's Opening Remarks December 10th Hearing

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

I want to thank you all for being here today.

We've gathered to discuss a very important topic, not just for our aging community, but also for generations planning for retirement and for those who won't be retiring for several decades.

Today's hearing will focus on the beneficial impact of purpose in the lives of our seniors, and what we can do as elected officials to help foster a purpose-filled life for our aging constituents.

We are lucky to be joined by expert witnesses who can speak to the impact of keeping seniors engaged in their communities – through business, education, and volunteering – and how aging Americans who remain engaged with purpose-driven lives create benefits for themselves and our economy.

Purpose and fulfillment are powerful forces that enrich families, strengthen communities, and support the health and longevity of our nation and its people. Having a purpose is an essential part of the American Dream, and it has long been an indicator of both mental and physical well-being across all age groups.

Purpose can be found in many things, including parenting, caring for loved ones, creating a business, and paid or volunteer work. But for seniors, many of whom are adjusting to retirement and life as empty-nesters, purpose can sometimes seem hard to find.

However, we should see this phase of life is a new chapter one where older Americans are empowered to stay active, pursue passions, and give back in ways that matter to them, all while reaping the rewards of connection, community, and better physical and mental well-being.

Here's the reality for a lot of folks preparing for retirement...while we hope that every American spends their working years working their dream jobs, that's not always the case. Millions of Americans have great jobs, they save up for retirement, and they look forward to chasing the dreams they may have put on pause in their golden years of retirement.

What I want this committee to think about today is how do we make sure that every American retiree can live their dreams in their older years.

How do we make sure they can take that course at the local college that they've been wanting to take for too long?

How do we make sure they can start that coffee shop, or bookstore, or bike shop that they've always dreamed about?

How do we make sure folks stay connected with their communities as they age and create value not only for themselves by keeping purpose in their lives, but also help mentor the next generation of leaders, coach the next generation of small business owners, and pass along their years of wisdom and experience in the process.

[Research](#) shows that older adults who remain engaged—whether through volunteering, mentoring, or taking on new responsibilities—experience greater physical health, mental resilience, and life satisfaction.

Community involvement, lifelong learning, and cross-generational connection are not just beneficial for the individuals involved; they foster a society where every generation thrives.

Finding purpose will look different for each person. Like I said before, for some, it will be taking a class or a course to explore an area of interest, volunteering in the community, or dedicating time to pursue a new hobby.

But for many seniors, purpose will be found in continuing to work in some capacity. This could be in their previous business, as a new part-time employee at a place they enjoy frequenting or even branching out and starting something new.

We need to remove the red tape that hampers or discourages older Americans from continuing work or starting new businesses or careers.

We also need to ensure we're removing regulations and creating an economic environment that fosters flourishing and keeps inflation down.

We need to ensure that older Americans and future generations can face retirement with a sense of financial security, and not of fear of inflation outpacing their nest egg. This way, seniors are only working if they want to, not because they have to.

The only way to ensure this is to get the government out of the way.

We did this in Florida. By cutting taxes and costly and unnecessary regulations, we managed to turn the economy around, making it a beacon for business and those wanting a full and purposeful life.

During my 8 years as governor, we cut taxes more than 100 times and slashed more than 5,000 burdensome regulations. We cut the time it took to get your license or permit from the state of Florida from weeks to days.

Florida businesses added 1.7 million jobs, we paid down more than \$10 billion of our debt, and we managed to increase the efficiency of government to provide additional services for our citizens and our state, including for our seniors.

Because of these policies, Florida is well known as a place that thousands of retirees' flock to every year, escaping less financially hospitable climates. In Florida, their dollars go farther, and they have communities and opportunities to experience connection and fulfillment.

Cutting taxes and creating a freedom-loving environment allows our senior citizens to thrive and our retired citizens to enjoy the retirement that they worked so hard for. It allows our aging constituents the freedom and stability to pursue their passions and build a life of purpose and fulfillment.

I look forward to a productive and meaningful conversation on this important topic."

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