

NATIONAL SENIOR CENTER MONTH

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, September marks National Senior Center Month. More than 11,000 senior centers across the country serve more than 1 million older adults every day. For many older Americans, senior centers are the heart of their communities, offering a place for everything from meals to recreational activities to health and wellness programs. Senior centers also create a sense of comity and community, giving older Americans a place to connect while reducing the social isolation that often burdens our older citizens.

This summer, as ranking member of the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, I visited numerous senior centers across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in rural, urban, and suburban areas, to discuss the issues on the minds of older Pennsylvanians. At each stop, older Pennsylvanians told me about the important role that senior centers play in their daily lives, as a gathering place and a resource, providing not only necessary nutrition programs, but also benefits counseling, employment assistance, volunteer opportunities, transportation assistance, and so much more.

Senior centers and senior center staff deserve our support. Communities piece together numerous sources to fund their senior center operations, including Federal, State, and local government resources, private-sector donations and grants, and the man-hours of countless volunteers. Many of the county commissioners who joined me during these visits expressed their support for the Community Development Block Grant, which regrettably is slated for elimination by the administration. Counties throughout Pennsylvania depend on the Community Development Block Grant program to fund important infrastructure in our communities. Now is not the time to scale back our investment in these needs. I stand with our community leaders in support of the Community Development Block Grant program, and I will fight to protect these vital resources from elimination.

I am delighted to join with leaders from across the aging network in Pennsylvanian and throughout the country in honoring the work of senior centers and recognizing September as National Senior Center Month.