

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

Chairman Bob Casey's Opening Statement
"An Economy That Cares: The Importance of Home-Based Services"
March 23, 2022

The hearing will come to order, we are gathered today in the Aging Committee to discuss the critical need to lower costs for families, get Americans back to work and to strengthen our economy. For too long, our Nation has viewed caregiving as a personal problem or limited to one family, and expecting those families to figure it out on their own. American families are silently struggling to find and afford reliable high-quality care that enables their loved ones to live independently.

Today, our witnesses will speak about the importance of home and community-based services for seniors and people with disabilities and the investment American families across our Nation desperately need. Brandon Kingsmore and Alene Shaheed will testify about how these services have changed their lives. They will talk about how home-based services make it possible not only for them to live, but to thrive. Brandon and Alene are not alone. More than 3 million Americans are able to remain in their homes and stay active in their communities because of home-based care. But at the same time, almost 820,000 Americans are languishing on wait lists for these services, sometimes waiting, not just weeks, not just months, but years waiting for these services. This limited access to care hurts more than just those in need of services. An underinvestment in caregiving affects all of us, it even hurts our economy.

Without access to this care, many people, usually women, are forced to leave the workforce to care for a loved one. An investment in

home-based care is an investment in families and our Nation. It will help people get back to work, it gives families, something I believe that is immeasurable, peace of mind. The peace of mind in knowing that their loved ones are cared for. This kind of investment will also give home care workers, the majority of whom are women from communities of color, a much-needed and long overdue raise. These workers provide essential care. An investment in home and community-based services would give these hard-working women, or I should say mostly women, the opportunity to better support their own families and their communities.

Last June, 40 Senators introduced the Better Care Better Jobs Act, that's bill S. 2210. I am proud to lead that legislation in the Senate, which has earned the support of over 800 national and state organizations. This bill is an investment in better jobs for home care workers, better care for seniors and people with disabilities and better support for those family caregivers I talked about earlier. This investment is about services and jobs!

Over 100 top economists and public policy experts have said that investing in home care will help the United States maintain a competitive workforce. The leading economic analysis firm Moody's found that: "Long term, the economy receives a lift from this policy, as it supports higher labor force growth." This investment is what makes sense for families, what makes sense for workers and what makes sense for our Nation. So it is an investment that is needed now, not ten, twenty years from now, we need this investment now. The Committee has received over 335 statements for the record that support the need for an immediate investment in home and community-based services. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about this important issue. Ranking Member Scott, I am pleased to turn it over to you for your opening remarks.