

# U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



**RANKING MEMBER** *Special Committee on Aging*

**Sen. Casey's Opening Statement  
That's Not the Government Calling:  
Protecting Seniors from the Social Security Impersonation Scam  
January 29, 2020**

“Chairman Collins thank you very much. Thank you for holding this hearing today to discuss Social Security Impersonation Scams.

“As everyone here knows we are at the middle of a very important proceeding on the floor of the Senate. At the same time, for Americans who are worried about their loved ones being scammed out of their hard earned savings, our efforts here and the efforts of others to stop con artists and fraudsters must be taken just as seriously.

“It is for this reason I am pleased this committee, the Aging Committee, is taking on this topic as the first one that we examine in the year 2020. The Social Security impersonation scam is an imposter scam plain and simple. In this case, however, the imposter diabolically is exploiting a public good—a benefit paid for and earned by hard working Americans.

“So we must not only be concerned for the sake of the individuals targeted, we also have to be concerned for the integrity of federal departments and agencies that are tasked with serving all of us.

“Just last week as we were preparing for this hearing one of my staff members received this message from Social Security imposters: [Plays voicemail of scam artist impersonating SSA]

‘This call is from department of Social Security Administration the reason for this call is to inform you that there is legal enforcement action filed on your name and Social Security number and has been involved in a crime. This is in reference to suspend your existing Social Security number on an immediate basis so call us back at the earliest possible at our number before we begin legal proceedings.’

“You can tell from just that brief example how alarming this can be for someone when they are using highly charged language to get that individual's attention. Anyone, anyone could be a victim of this kind of a crime.

“So one thing we have to be focused on, of course, is tracking these people down, prosecuting them and throwing them in jail, but we can't just talk about that here, we've got to talk about ways to prevent it, and that is one of the main purposes of the hearing.

“In this case, thankfully, my staff member recognized this for what it was, but not all Americans are immersed in this issue every day.

“So today, we are here to make clear that no one from the United States government, no one from our government, will ever make these types of threats.

“In some ways, as Senator Collins talked about, we made some progress on the IRS version of this by warning people what the IRS would not do, we have to do the same in this case.

“So we need help getting this message out. Every American, particularly seniors, must be armed with information—it will take an all hands on deck approach. The committee is doing its part by releasing our 2020 fraud book.

“When I visit senior centers in my home state of Pennsylvania I bring copies of the report with me, every single individual who wants a copy goes home with one; it is real bestseller at senior centers—as long as we keep bringing those copies with us.

“So this year, these same seniors will also be going home with a poster that inserted into the book and that is in the back. You can take a look at that if you get a copy of it here. I want to make sure I use these visual aids. This poster, which is not huge but I think you get a sense of the size of it and that it, gives people a lot of information that our committee prepared.

“So we are grateful, Senator Collins and I are, that our staff, both staffs, helped us with those. But that is another way to remind seniors, we hope that this poster will be held up by the proverbial magnets on refrigerators or other ways to remind folks about this scam.

“Public awareness alone is not enough. The federal government has to redouble its efforts. I know we are going to be hearing about those efforts today.

“It is for this reason that I joined Senator Collins and others on the committee in sending letters to the Social Security Administration, the Inspector General for Social Security, the Elder Justice Coordinating Committee and the Federal Trade Commission asking for help. I know that all these entities are eager to help, to engage.

“The private sector must also be involved, I have a bill with Senator Jerry Moran, the Stop Senior Scams Act, which will help banks, wire transfer companies and retailers to train their employees to spot a scam and to stop it before money exchanges hands.

“The Commerce Committee passed this bill last year without any objection, we are trying to get it through the Senate as well.

“So we know that con artists and scammers should not be allowed to still money from our loved ones nor should they be allowed to steal our confidence in government itself. So we got a lot of work to do and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today and the proposals they have.

“Again, I look forward to working with Chairman Collins, my colleagues on the committee and others in the Senate to stop these imposters in their tracks. Thank you Chairman Collins.”

###