

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



RANKING MEMBER *Special Committee on Aging*

Sen. Casey Opening Statement Hearing on Aging With Community: Livable Communities May 17, 2017

“Chairman Collins, thank you for holding this important hearing and also for working to reschedule it after it was postponed from last week. And I want to thank the witnesses for being here today.

“As many of you know May is Older Americans Month. And this year, the slogan for Older Americans Month is ‘Age Out Loud,’ a good slogan.

“So, our hearing topic today livable communities fits nicely into the theme.

“Older Americans want to be out and about, ‘aging out loud,’ in their cities and towns.

“They want to go to little league games, see a movie, work or volunteer, shop, or interact with their neighbors.

“For this reason, I am pleased that experts from communities large and small, rural and urban, are here to discuss how to design livable communities.

“I am particularly delighted to have a leader here today from my home state of Pennsylvania. In particular York, Pa. I’ll introduce Cathy later, but we’re grateful for the work she’s done and the people of York County and the city of York. And I can confirm what a great community York is, I was just there not long ago. And we are grateful that she is with us.

“We should aim for every county across the country to be like York County.

“And I know that Chairman Collins talked about communities in Maine and how are, so we should have a competition to get as many, as we can, signed-up.

“What does that mean in practice? I guess that’s what some might be asking. It means local officials re-orienting their thinking to plan for and invest in:

- Home repair programs so aging adults can maintain their households without great expense;

- Accessory Dwelling Units so relatives can live with their families and retain their privacy;
- More and varied transportation options for those who are no longer able to drive;
- Wide, slip-free, even-surface sidewalks and more time to cross the street at traffic signals. I think people at any age would want that; or
- Simple solutions like a bench to sit on and wait for a bus.

“These strategies can make a big difference to a senior who wants to be active and engaged in their community. And, these strategies can help us make progress on the public health challenge of senior isolation.

“These strategies also make it possible to make towns and cities inclusive, as the Chairman said, that are cross-generational and are age and income-friendly.

“I expect our witnesses today will also address the importance of neighborhoods that have a mix of older and younger residents and families from multiple socio-economic levels.

“We know what inclusive neighborhoods are also the healthiest neighborhoods. And we know that making our communities age-friendly won’t be fully realized without partners at the federal level.

“It is, in part, for this reason that I have joined my colleagues in urging President Trump to work with us on an infrastructure package—legislation to invest in our nation’s infrastructure.

“I am committed to ensuring states and localities have the resources necessary to invest in our cities and towns of the future—creating millions of jobs along the way.

“I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about how that investment would also significantly benefit older Americans and individuals with disabilities.

“Thank you, Madam Chair.”

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