

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



RANKING MEMBER *Special Committee on Aging*

Sen. Casey's Opening Statement Hearing on Changing the Trajectory of Alzheimer's: Reducing Risk, Detecting Early Symptoms, and Improving Data June 19, 2018

“I want to thank Chairman Collins for her leadership on this issue, and for making sure we have this hearing today and for all of you for being here. Everyone here, but especially of course our witnesses who are providing testimony to us today.

“We want to thank of course the advocates as well who traveled very great distances to be here. I know many from Pennsylvania, but virtually every state is represented across our country.

“The experience of living with Alzheimer's or a related dementia, or caring for someone with the disease, is unfortunately all too common. It's a disease that affects all communities and doesn't matter where you are from or how much money you earn. It affects so many Americans.

“In our state alone, the state of Pennsylvania, an estimated 280,000 people ages 65 and over are currently living with Alzheimer's. And, as we will hear from Secretary Osborne from Pennsylvania, that number may not tell the entire story. There may be over 100,000 more people living with related conditions in our state, and hundreds of thousands more loved ones, friends and neighbors who are doing their best to care for them.

“As our population ages these numbers will only grow, which is why we must take action now.

“Last year, I was pleased to join Chairman Collins in support of increased funding for research into finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease. The federal funding was increased by an additional \$414 million, bringing our annual federal research investment to \$1.8 billion. That's a big step, but as evidenced by the number of people in this room, it is not enough. So, I am continuing to press for additional research dollars, as I know folks in both parties are.

“We also need to ensure our communities and our health systems are able to meet the needs of those living with Alzheimer's and their caregivers. We need to improve our ability to diagnose the disease early so that we can slow its progression. We need to also make sure individuals and families don't just get a diagnosis, but also get the support they need to deal with the disease.

“And we need to make sure that no communities are left out of these efforts. That is why I am cosponsoring bipartisan legislation introduced by members of this committee – Chairman Collins, of course, and Senator Cortez Masto – to tackle these challenges.

“The BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act will help state public health systems like Pennsylvania's make real progress in the fight against Alzheimer's. And it is an example of the type of bipartisan cooperation that we need now more than ever.

“It is my hope that the voices of our witnesses here today—and the voices of those of you in this room today—will help us get this bill to the President’s desk. And, it is my hope that your advocacy will help us secure a \$2 billion annual investment in research, so that we can soon hold a hearing focused on treatment and on a cure.

“I want to thank Chairman Collins, again, and thank everyone here. And again I’ll say to our witnesses—we look forward to your testimony today.”

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