

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



RANKING MEMBER *Special Committee on Aging*

**Sen. Casey's Opening Statement
The Complex Web of Prescription Drug Prices
Part I: Patients Struggling with Rising Costs
March 6, 2019**

“Thank you, Chairman Collins, for holding this hearing.

“When I talk to people in Pennsylvania, whether they are families, or workers or seniors, one of the main topics that keeps coming up over and over again is ‘how do I make ends meet?’

“We have seen unacceptably slow growth in wages over not just years but now literally decades. And certainly at least the last four decades. The cost of living continues to rise. It is more expensive to put food on the table.

“The amount of money families must save to pay for priorities like childcare or a college education. And the cost of prescription medications, of course, is at the top of that list. The cost of these prescription drugs is busting the budgets of many families across Pennsylvania and across the country. Seniors and their families are stretched to the limits. We’ll hear more about that today.

“The costs are overwhelming.

“Just last week, the Senate Finance Committee heard from the companies that make the prescription medications and set the prices of these drugs. None of the executives that testified last week have difficulty to making ends meet because of the cost of one of their products. I hope, we all hope, that they will watch this hearing, or at least see it after the fact, and listen to our witnesses share their personal stories and their struggles to afford needed medications.

“These are the stories of patients who take only half of a dose in order to make their medication stretch. And they are the stories of families who never expected to need to decide between putting food on the table and paying for a prescription.

“We will hear all of this in the testimony of Americans from Pennsylvania, Maine, Georgia, Indiana and Florida. They are the voices of our loved ones – our parents and grandparents, our aunts and uncles, our brothers and our sisters.

“And the money they are spending now has a significant impact on the resources they will be available for their children and our children—indeed our future.

“We must heed the warning of our witnesses today—these prescription drug prices are unsustainable and for far too many families, of course, unaffordable. If we want families to have

the money they need for childcare or for retirement, and everything in between, we must take action on this issue. So tomorrow, I look forward to a dialogue about solutions after we have heard stories today from Americans who are appearing before us.

“Once and for all, we must advance common sense policies to help Americans afford the medications they need.

“I want to thank each of our witnesses for being here today. And I especially want to express my gratitude to Chairman Collins for holding this important hearing. Thank you.”

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