

# U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



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

---

## **Sen. Casey's Opening Statement Hearing on Alzheimer's: New Directions in Biomedical Research and Caregiving April 2, 2019**

“Thank you Chairman Collins for, of course, holding this hearing today. One of the highlights of the year in terms of hearings. I don't know of a hearing throughout the year that has this much energy and enthusiasm, this kind of a crowd and that kind of applause.

“But I also want to thank Chairman Collins for her enduring leadership in the fight to find a cure for Alzheimer's disease.

“I want to extend our gratitude as well to all the advocates in the room today. And all of the caregivers, and family members who have traveled across the country to be in this hearing room with us today.

“Few American families are unaffected by this vicious disease. Indeed, over 5.8 million people over the age of 65 currently live with Alzheimer's disease. Approximately 280,000 of those people are Pennsylvanians. And, those number are rising. And we know that the impact it has on the person diagnosed, but also the impact on their family can be devastating. And that's – of course – an understatement.

“We must support efforts to find a cure.

“I am pleased, every year, to be able to lead the appropriations letter in the Senate with Senator Burr to advocate for more research funding at the National Institutes of Health. And to join Chairman Collins in ensuring robust funding for Alzheimer's disease research. And in this case, of course, specifically in her work on the appropriations committee – and we commend her for that.

“But, until there is a cure, we must do everything in order to make sure that people receive the best possible care. So we focus on both finding a cure, but also on ensuring quality care.

“We know that this disease impacts different people differently. So our efforts must take into account people who are diagnosed at younger ages, people with disabilities, people from diverse backgrounds and people living in both urban and rural settings.

“For example, people who are diagnosed at younger ages and are still working may have difficulty knowing where to turn for help, because many essential supports are more commonly advertised to seniors.

“That's why I joined with Senator Collins, Senator Jones, who is with us today and Senator Capito in introducing the Younger-Onset Alzheimer's Disease Act to ensure that people younger

than age 65 have access to counselors and support groups to help them navigate the health care system and plan for their long-term care needs.

“A subset of the people diagnosed at these younger ages are of course people with disabilities. For example, nearly half of all people with Down Syndrome will develop Alzheimer’s disease in their lifetime; 30 percent of these Americans will be diagnosed before the age of 50. Research and clinical trials must include people with disabilities to ensure their needs are met in the quest for treatment and a cure.

“And, so, I’d like to thank Senator Collins again for agreeing to work with me on policies that would address this specific disparity among people with disabilities.

“We also know that African Americans are two times more likely than their White counterparts to develop Alzheimer’s disease, and the Hispanic and Latino populations of America are one and a half times more likely to develop Alzheimer’s disease. We must understand why and what can be done about those issues.

“People living in rural areas may not live near a major medical center or research facility, which makes it harder for them to participate in research studies or clinical trials.

“We must tackle this disease from every angle—from continuing our research for a cure to ensuring medical professionals and community organizations can provide the best care possible to every American with Alzheimer’s disease.

“So I look forward to our witnesses’ testimony today and the important conversations we’ll have. Thank you very much.”

###