

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



RANKING MEMBER *Special Committee on Aging*

Sen. Casey's Opening Statement

Hearing on the Older Americans Act: Protecting and Supporting Seniors as they Age May 8, 2019

“Thank you, Chairman Collins, for holding this hearing on the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act.

“As the Chairman mentioned, this hearing today will serve as an important step in congressional efforts to reauthorize this important legislation, and the programs connected to it. I am pleased that the Aging Committee will be playing such an integral role in shaping this reauthorization.

“The Older Americans Act reminds us who we are as a country. It represents our commitment to the generations who made us who we are today. And, it lifts up the seniors who need our help the most. This law serves more than 11 million Americans each year—including about 400,000 seniors throughout Pennsylvania.

“That’s why I’m pleased that 34 Area Agencies on Aging, which represent about 60 percent of the counties in my home state, answered my two questions for us recently. Number one, ‘how is the Older Americans Act currently working?’ and the second question we asked, that they answered, was ‘how should this important law be strengthened?’ And we’re grateful for that kind of feedback.

“In every city and every town, the aging network said that there is no match for the high-quality services that senior centers and Area Agencies on Aging provide to older Pennsylvanians. The Older Americans Act programs support Pennsylvanians and their caregivers by providing meals, respite and protection from fraud and abuse. And importantly, the Older Americans Act helps seniors age in the location of their choice, which of course is most often their homes and communities.

“Our witnesses today will echo much of the comments made by the Pennsylvania aging network. Yet, we must always strive to improve as we always do in reauthorization.

“It’s for this reason that I’m pleased that aging service providers in Pennsylvania also shared very concrete recommendations on how to make the Older American Act work better. They suggested that we do more to support grandparents raising grandchildren and improve programs designed to fight social isolation. And, they said that we need to strengthen innovation to better show the worth of Older Americans Act programming throughout the country.

“We also need to do more to ensure that Area Agencies on Aging are prepared to meet seniors where they are—in their homes and communities. And, they believe it is important that we invest in data collection to show how successful these services are at keeping seniors healthy and out of the hospital.

“I’m pleased that we’ll have the opportunity today to learn more about the successes of the Older Americans Act and to hear recommendations for how the law can be improved. I look forward to continuing working with Chairman Collins, members of the Aging Committee and members of the Health Education Labor Pensions Committee on this important reauthorization.

“Thank you, Chairman Collins.”

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