

# U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



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

**Sen. Casey's Opening Statement**  
**Redefining Reality: How the Special Diabetes Program is**  
**Changing the Lives of Americans with Type 1 Diabetes**  
**July 10, 2019**

“Thank you, Chairman Collins, for holding this hearing, we’re grateful to be back again with so many delegates of the JDRF Children’s Congress. I want to welcome you back to the Senate. I know many of you been here over many years now.

“I am pleased to welcome four delegates from Pennsylvania. Adriana, whom I’ll introduce a little bit later, as well as Joey, Libby and Mairead and their families.

“It’s so important that you have joined us because finding a cure for Type 1 diabetes requires a combined effort from people of all ages and backgrounds. Advances in treatment and our understanding of Type 1 diabetes has come a long way.

“As Chairman Collins mentioned, in just the past decade, more and more people have gained access to continuous glucose monitors and, more recently, the use of the artificial pancreas. In large part, this progress is due to those of you in this room – young and a little bit older than young.

“We’re grateful that you’re here again to bring a sense of urgency to this issue. Many of the advocates who have traveled to Washington before to press for funding for this program are doing so again today and we’re grateful.

“We’re pleased to report the, as Senator Collins said, the extension of the funding is already in the works, and I was proud as a member of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, so called HELP Committee, to support the five-year extension of the reauthorization of the Special Diabetes Program.

“This sets up the possibility for the longest extension ever. We need to make sure that the full Senate passes it, as Senator Collins said, by the end of September and also that the House does the same.

“By securing stable funding for medical research, that is just one part of the agenda. We must also be sure that each individual and family can afford lifesaving treatment.

“During a hearing last year, this committee took a magnifying glass to the rising cost of insulin. And just recently, the committee concluded a three-part hearing series on the cost of prescription drugs.

“It will not surprise anybody in this room that the cost of insulin featured prominently during those hearings as well. Let me summarize why there’s such an urgency to address the price of prescription drugs as it applies to today’s hearing.

“Number one, the rising cost of prescription drugs is not occurring in isolation, it’s part of a larger challenge that many Americans face every day trying to make ends meet.

“Flat wages and high costs, might be the fastest way to say it. For so many families, the cost of prescription drugs is like a bag of rocks thrown on their shoulders every day, in addition to the other bags of rocks they’re carrying around: High health care costs, college tuition, child care costs and the like.

“So we have lots of work to do to make sure that we’re focused on, and get results on lowering the cost of prescription drugs. We know that less costly insulin is about, oh maybe, only 100 years overdue.

“As we’ll hear today, the price an individual or family must pay for a vial of insulin is also impacted by health insurance coverage. That’s why the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid are critically important to shield families from very high and onerous out of pocket costs for insulin.

“In Pennsylvania, because of Medicaid, insulin for most children is fully covered. That should be the case in every single state.

“And so, today, I am introducing the Affordable Health Care for Children with Disabilities Act, which will encourage states to adopt policies that Pennsylvania put in place over 20 years ago.

“We’ve got a sacred responsibility to children and to young adults – and to their parents – who are here today, as well as those across the country, to do everything in our power to make sure that we’re doing everything that we can to make life better.

“So, thank you to Chairman Collins and all of our delegates and parents and friends and advocates. We’re so grateful you’re with us today.”

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