

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

The Safe Interactions Act (SIA)

Why do we need the Safe Interactions Act?

Law enforcement officers must be prepared for interactions with people with disabilities. Yet, the training they receive is often minimal and varies greatly by agency, state, and region. The limited available research has found that people with disabilities are more than two and a half times more likely to be victims of a crime and three times as likely to be victims of a serious crime as people without a disability. These occurrences of crime victimization mean they have an increased number of interactions with law enforcement officers, who may be unprepared or lack knowledge about the best approach to communicate with people with different disabilities. Sadly, these interactions can end fatally. A [report](#) from the Ruderman Family Foundation found that people with disabilities make up between one-third and one-half of all people shot by law enforcement officers in 2015. These findings further demonstrate the need for increased and continued training to protect both law enforcement officers and the communities they serve.

What will the Safe Interactions Act do?

The Safe Interactions Act provides grants to enable nonprofit disability organizations to form partnerships with law enforcement agencies and develop training programs that increase the understanding of different disability types among new and veteran law enforcement officers. Preference will be given to applicants with partnerships in rural communities and those that include Black, Indigenous, and other people of color in the trainings.

The Act would require:

- Partnerships between a nonprofit disability organization and law enforcement agencies.
- Inclusion of self-advocates in the development and implementation of trainings, including a diverse group of disability types, such as intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health disabilities, and sensory and/or physical disabilities.
- A minimum of eight hours of training for new law enforcement officers, including four hours of interactive sessions led by trainers with disabilities, and at least four hours of training every year for existing law enforcement officers.
- The establishment of an advisory council, chaired by a person with a disability, to oversee the training program development and implementation.

Cosponsors: *Senator Moran, Senator Gillibrand, Senator Murkowski, Senator Markey, Senator Murphy, Senator Merkley, Senator Sanders, Senator Menendez, Senator Blumenthal, Senator Hirono, Senator Duckworth, Senator Van Hollen, Senator Whitehouse.*