

Thank Chairman Casey and witnesses

Technology Accessibility

Technology has changed the way we live our lives.

During COVID, far too many in-person services closed. People were forced to turn to the internet for basic services from food to healthcare and even local, state, and federal government services.

I caution against ever closing physical doors again in the future. I hear from many Hoosiers and seniors that there is no replacement for in-person connection.

It is clear, that society is relying more and more on technology. So, we ought to design with accessibility in mind.

Federal Failures

Section 508 of the *Rehabilitation Act* mandates that federal electronic and information technology be accessible to people with disabilities.

However, we have heard from constituents that the federal government has not done a good job at complying, far too often leaving people with disabilities behind.

That is why I joined Chairman Casey in requesting a GAO study into the federal government's compliance with Section 508.

States Leading

While this law generally does not apply to states, many have taken it upon themselves to improve the accessibility of their services.

My home state's mobile and digital service strategy has been recognized nationally for improving the delivery of services for Hoosiers.

Opening Statement for 09.21.2023 Technology Accessibility Hearing

For more than a decade, the Indiana state government website has included screen readers, quarterly accessibility audits, high contrast views, and modifiable screen size.

In 2021, Indiana added a new feature, “accessiBe,” which allows users to modify their experience for various accessibility profiles including seizure safe, vision impaired, cognitive disability, or blindness.

The state works with local governments to make their website platform available to them – so far more than 70 local governments use the Indiana state government platform.

The state and local governments also learn strategies and best practices to increase the accessibility of services from organizations like Bosma Enterprises.

Bosma utilizes cutting edge assistive technology and computer training programs to help Hoosiers with vision loss regain their independence.

I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a statement from Bosma.

This type of work is not unique to just Indiana.

States like Colorado, Ohio, and Oklahoma, who we will hear from today, are all leading in technology accessibility.

We must ensure that states do not lose the flexibility they need to continue to introduce programs and mechanisms that work best for their unique communities.

I am encouraged by the states’ leadership and urge them to continue to explore ways to improve accessibility.

Thank Chairman – yield back.