

# U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY

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CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

## **Chairman Bob Casey's Opening Statement "Stopping Senior Scams: Empowering Communities to Fight Fraud" September 22, 2022**

The hearing will come to order. I want to thank everyone for being here especially those who had to make a return trip for the difficulty we had in conducting this hearing, so thank you for being here. We know that there are more than 5 million older adults in the U.S. who do not have the affordable and healthy food they need in their pantries. We also know that one in four grandparent-headed households experiences food insecurity. We can all agree that It is unacceptable that any senior is going hungry. Many older adults face preventable barriers to accessing the food they need to remain healthy and independent. Some older adults may be unable to drive, for example, and need accessible transportation to go to the grocery store. Often, I should say, Others may benefit from streamlined enrollment processes or extended certification periods. Most older adults are living with chronic conditions and need the option to include fruits and vegetables as part of their meals.

Thankfully, addressing hunger is an issue of longstanding bipartisan interest and action for this Committee, the Special Committee on Aging. We continue this tradition with today's hearing by introducing with Ranking Member Scott the bi-partisan Senior Nutrition Task Force Act, S. 5096, fifty ninety six, which will establish an interagency task force to address hunger among older adults and adults with disabilities. We also are releasing the Committees annual bipartisan report, in both English and Spanish, recognizing the positive impact of 50 years of funding to support the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program. This is the report, our bipartisan report, and this is the Spanish version that we are releasing today. Both of course are available on the Aging Committee website. That's 50 years of bipartisan investment to ensure older adults have the food they need to remain healthy and independent.

With the report, the Committee is releasing state-level fact sheets highlighting the outcomes of the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program for each state represented by the members of our Committee. In my home state of Pennsylvania, more than 9.4 million meals are served to older adults each year in congregate settings and through home-delivered services. Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to visit with Linda Ellison, from Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, who referred to her local Meals on Wheels Program as "The Miracle on the Way Program." That's because the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program provides meals *and* helps older adults remain connected to their communities. I believe We can, however, further help older adults who

need nutritious food. Seniors like Barbara Myzick [MY-ZIC], from Luzerne County in my home state of Pennsylvania, right up in northeastern Pennsylvania, who tell us that, “it’s hard keeping a diet that’s good for our health because that food can be expensive.”

We know that less than half, less than half, of eligible older adults are enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which can help seniors put healthy food on the table *and* stretch their incomes. We also know that many older adults and adults with disabilities, like Elayne Masters who is here with us today testifying, from Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, so you can get a sense of the distance, may struggle to access the benefits they are eligible for due to preventable barriers in their lives. I look forward to working with Democrats and Republicans to invest in and increase access to essential nutrition programs for older adults. The White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health held earlier this fall laid out a framework to support nutrition across the lifespan. Senator Braun, a member of this Committee, worked in a bipartisan manner to make the Conference happen. Together, we can address senior hunger in the United States and provide older adults with meaningful opportunities for connection. And with that I turn it over to Ranking Member, Ranking Member Scott.