

9.8.21 Ranking Member Tim Scott, Opening Statement *Living your Best Life Now: Enjoying your Golden Years with Physical and Mental Vitality*

Thank you everyone for joining us for this special Committee on Aging as we discuss in our first field hearing some of the important issues around living your best life now. This is an exciting topic and I look forward to hearing from our incredible guest that we have here with us today. Thank you all for being here, and I look forward to hearing your comments and I am encouraged by the thoughts and words that you already spoken today, and I look forward to have you all address the public as well.

Thank you everyone, and I want to welcome everyone for joining us virally, and we decided because of COVID, with higher level of activity and most important thing we could do was to have a special hearing on aging was not to bring a bunch of folks into a room, so I think that was the first decision made by my excellent staff, this was a good decision and I certainly support it, and now I look forward to having the opportunity to discuss some of the really important issues that faces South Carolina, and frankly our nation that relate to the issues around aging.

Focusing on living your best life now, is something that when I think about that topic the first person that comes to mind is my mother, Francis Scott who has for the last 45 years served in the capacity at the Roper St. Francis Healthcare as a nurse's assistant, so she is someone who has really helped so many folks over her four plus decades to age gracefully, and this is someone who of course is my personal American heroes, my mom Francis Scott, she has spent so much time teaching me a valuable lessons about taking care of others when they can't take care of themselves, and this is something really embedded in our culture here in South Carolina, is the fact that we do want to go the extra mile for those folks who have served us, personally, individually or corporately in our state, and we want to take care of those people in our state who have done such a great job of helping others. The good news is we have innovation, which is a major part of who we are as South Carolinians, and that does not just mean from a healthcare perspective, but sometimes that means financial security, or dignity when it comes to aging. The importance of aging gracefully requires all of us to help each of us. South Carolina has had tremendous growth since 2010, 11% of growth in our state some of the five million people, smart Americans now call South Carolina their home. Interestingly enough at the same time those South Carolinians over the age of 65 is almost 1 out of 5, 18% of South Carolinians are over the age of 65, that is good news, because we are living longer and people are making the decision to call South Carolina their home, because of that distinction that over 18% of South Carolinians are over the age of 65, South Carolina ranks one of the top ten with the highest percentage of people over the age of 65 in our country.

Seniors from all across the nation are flocking to South Carolina, maybe it's because it's the history in our state and the fact that we focus so much on preservation, it might be the beaches here down in the low counties of each state, or it could be because of the folks in Spartanburg, according to the U.S. news and world report some of the best places to live in all of America is right here in the palm meadow state. However, we have much to celebrate as a state we also have some challenges that we face as a state, and frankly as a nation, heart disease the leading cause of death in South Carolina, two out of five South Carolinians have high blood pressure. South Carolina also ranks six and twelfth as it relates to adults with diabetes and obesity, unfortunately because we are faced with these challenges, our state a part of the stroke belt. There is good news, South Carolina is emerging in the life sciences, led by the department of commerce and other regional economic development partners, we have recruited over 800 companies with over 43 thousand life science professionals that's economic impact in the state is over 12 billion dollars, but more importantly, it focuses our attention as a state on the importance of developing and involving the healthcare expertise so that our seniors have that opportunity to live life and to live it at their best right now. So, I am very thankful to live in a state where we focus on the outcomes, you know many people have said that music and the arts are like the universal language, feeding the human spirit during the best of times, and frankly even in the worst of times. One great example is the University of South Carolina's new horizon band, and band for people 50 years and over, yes that means me too. Sarah Crafton, a band member emphasized the joy of being able to work with and see one another each week to make music together, Mr. Craig Plank agrees that this help with keeping the mind sharp. I love the fact that we are engaging in really important initiatives and activities that allows the human spirit to continue to flourish in the best of years.

Frankly, as I said earlier that our later reign according to those of us that follow scripture that we must be better than the former reign, so I believe that the best is yet to come for our seniors and I think that is a powerful opportunity to focus on that today. I am grateful for the assistance of Senator Mark Kelly from Arizona, he has joined me in introducing for the first time a resolution and making September National Healthy Aging month. It recognizes senior centers for their central services and activities that forge relationships, purpose and wellbeing. Today, nearly 11,000 senior centers serve more than one million seniors. I also want to thank at this time the wearing senior center, in Roper St. Francis Healthcare system for being such a great host today. Your center is a home away from home for so many seniors and they are able to engage in music and the arts, pickle ball, book clubs and even drum ball. Now before we are done Dr. Ciccone, I want to know what drum ball is, but it seems like you would like to know as well, so we will defer that for one of the questions for the record. I will say that we sit at a place named for a former city council member, Louis Raring who passes away just a couple years ago, I will say I knew Louis Raring, he was a

prince of a fella, and he was an iron fist and he was the kind of person who set the example as he spoke with wisdom and grace, he was a powerful presence, but always gracious, and his son Keith is a member of the Charleston city council as he was before he passed away, so it is fitting to be in a place where someone with such wisdom and grace led his community in a powerful way, and now we have an opportunity to use the amazing facility to talk about graceful living.