

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY

 RANKING MEMBER *Special Committee on Aging*

Sen. Casey's Opening Statement Hearing on Exploitation of Older Americans by Guardians and Others They Trust April 18, 2018

“I want to thank Chairman Collins for holding this important hearing today.

“As we know, as the Baby Boomer generation continues to age, guardianship increasingly touches the lives of many individuals and their families. However, guardianship doesn't only impact older Americans. It can affect adults of all ages, including people with disabilities.

“While guardianship is supposed to be protective, and might sometimes be necessary, it can also bring a loss of rights. That's why it's imperative that we get it right.

“As Chairman Collins mentioned, in recent years, the media and national organizations have highlighted cases where guardians have abused, neglected or exploited a person subject to guardianship. We have a sacred responsibility to ensure that no one loses their house or their life savings as a result of a court-appointed guardian.

“As we'll hear today, some states have taken efforts to improve guardianship, but it's also clear that much more work needs to be done. For instance, we don't even have basic data on guardianship itself. We don't know how many people are subject to guardianship, who their guardians are, if a guardian has been thoroughly vetted and how many people are possibly being abused or neglected by their guardians. We should be able to agree that finding answers to these questions is the least we can do to protect our loved ones.

“And that's why I am pleased that today's hearing will be the first in a two-part series of committee hearings on this issue and that guardianship will be the subject of the committee's annual report. I very much look forward to examining this issue and discussing how Congress can do its part to ensure individuals subject to guardianship are protected and that their well-being is considered first and foremost.

“So again, thank you to Chairman Collins for holding this hearing and thank you to our witnesses for lending your time, your knowledge and your expertise on this critical issue. Thank you.”

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