

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



FIGHTING *for a* **FAIR SHOT** *for* **FAMILIES, KIDS and SENIORS**

Fighting for the Rights and Equality of Persons with Disabilities

Since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act over 20 years ago, persons with disabilities living in the United States have made significant progress, but there is still much work to be done to ensure that Pennsylvanians with disabilities are able to fully participate in society, live independently, have equal opportunities and be economically self-sufficient. As a member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions and the Committee on Finance, Senator Casey is uniquely positioned to continue his advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities.

- In December 2014, President Obama signed the **ABLE Act** into law, legislation written and led by Senator Casey. This law enables individuals with disabilities and their families the ability to create tax-exempt savings accounts that can fund a variety of essential expenses for the person with a disability, including educational expenses; medical and dental care; health, prevention, and wellness expenditures; employment training and support; assistive technology; personal supports services; transportation; housing; and other expenses for life necessities. The ABLE Act gives these individuals an option for saving for their future financial needs in a way that supports their unique situation and makes it more feasible to live full, productive lives in their communities. As a result of federal enabling legislation, 48 states, including Pennsylvania, have enacted state laws to create ABLE Acts.
- Senator Casey introduced the **Empowering Parents & Students Through Information Act**, which was recently enacted into law as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This new law will clear up state guidelines and empower parents to make more informed decisions about which educational track is best for their child with a disability.
- Senator Casey is a cosponsor of the **Disability Integration Act**, one of the most important pieces of legislation to be introduced in the 114th Congress. This bill would ensure that individuals with disabilities who wish to remain in their homes are able to receive support and services similar to those living in institutionalized environments, thus aiding in a more independent lifestyle for many people.
- Senator Casey is a cosponsor of the **Transition to Independence Act**, which would promote economic self-determination for workers with disabilities, helping states to transition these employees from secluded or subminimum wage workplaces to integrated and fulfilling environments.
- Senator Casey is a longtime supporter of fully funding the **Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**. The original federal government commitment to IDEA was to fund the legislation at 40 percent of the excess cost of educating a student with a disability. Unfortunately the federal government has never lived up to this expectation. Currently IDEA funds approximately 16 percent of the costs.
- Senator Casey introduced the **Veterans Homebuyer Accessibility Act of 2015 (S.2277)**, which would provide an \$8,000 refundable tax credit for specially adaptive housing modifications, and an \$8,000 first time homebuyer tax credit for all eligible Veterans. This bill makes it easier for

disabled Veterans to perform necessary adaptive modifications to their homes so they are able to live comfortably and independently.

- Senator Casey successfully requested a Government Accountability Office review of the accessibility of voting systems and polling places to individuals with disabilities. Despite improvements in recent election cycles, those with disabilities continue to face unacceptable barriers to voting. This review will shine a light on what remains to be done to ensure all Americans have unfettered access to the franchise.

Resources for Pennsylvanians with Disabilities:

- If you feel that your rights have been violated under the Americans with Disabilities Act or would like more information on protections under the law, please visit www.ada.gov or www.disability.gov.
- If you would like information on services for individuals with disabilities in Pennsylvania, please visit <http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/servicesfordisabled/>.
- Please do not hesitate to call Senator Casey's Harrisburg office at (717) 231-7540 or visit <http://casey.senate.gov/constituents/casework/>.