

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



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

Rural Economy

America's small towns and rural communities are an important part of the backbone of the US economy. From farming to manufacturing, rural communities help to drive our nation's productivity. Yet despite their importance to our economy, rural America's infrastructure is falling further and further behind. Of Pennsylvania's 67 counties, 48 are rural. Senator Casey is an advocate for ensuring these communities have the tools they need to thrive in a 21st century economy and has been working to help boost counties' and localities' ability to help their resident's live healthy and productive lives and have access to the ladder of opportunity. We need to do more – not less – to strengthen our communities and help working families.

Infrastructure

- Job creation in rural areas can only occur when there is infrastructure in place to support growing industries, but rural economies often struggle to support capital-intensive projects. Senator Casey has consistently advocated for strong funding for infrastructure development in rural areas. Senator Casey is a supporter of the Senate Democrats' Jobs and Infrastructure Plan for America's Workers which allocated over \$175 billion dedicated for new investments for Rural America.
- During markup of the 2017 tax bill, Senator Casey offered an amendment to provide \$500 billion in infrastructure bonds. Among other things, these bonds could be used for road and bridge repair, rural broadband, repair and replacement of water infrastructure and construction of rural schools and community colleges. The amendment was voted down on a party line vote in committee.
- Senator Casey is a strong advocate for the Community Development Block Grant. This program allows many rural communities to develop much-needed affordable housing opportunities, upgrade infrastructure and engage in innovative economic development. In 2018, Pennsylvania will receive close to \$186 million from the Community Development Block Grant.
- Senator Casey successfully advocated for funding for USDA's Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program, which supports construction of waste and drinking water infrastructure. In 2016 alone, this program provided Pennsylvania with \$55 million in funding to support 16 projects.

Economic Development

- Senator Casey is a strong advocate for the Appalachian Regional Commission, which in 2016 provided \$12.4 million in funding for 59 projects in PA. These funds were matched by more than \$17.7 million and attracted an additional \$58.2 million in leveraged private investment.
- Senator Casey successfully advocated for an increase in funding for the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The EDA helps to address specific economic development challenges facing rural communities in the Commonwealth today. Since 2013, Pennsylvania has received 35 investments totaling over \$44 million.
- Senator Casey strongly supports efforts to expand broadband access to areas currently lacking it. In 2018, he led sixteen of his colleagues on a letter asking the President to prioritize rural broadband buildout in his infrastructure proposal.

- The funding bill signed in March 2018 included \$600 million for a new rural broadband loan and grant pilot program administered by the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) at the Department of Agriculture. At an April 2018 Agriculture Committee hearing, Senator Casey pushed Agriculture Secretary Perdue to move quickly to disburse these funds so investments can be made and broadband can be built out to the areas that need it most.
- Senator Casey cosponsored an amendment to the 2018 Farm Bill that would increase authorized funding levels for the RUS rural broadband program from \$150 million to \$600 million annually.
- Senator Casey has joined his colleagues on numerous letters asking the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to increase federal support available for the Rural Health Care Program, which helps provide the broadband services necessary for the provision of health care, and the High-Cost Program, which helps support broadband deployment to rural and remote areas.