

INSIGHTS

Senate Special
Committee on
Aging Examines the
Challenges with
Assisted Living
Facilities

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On January 25, 2024, the Senate Special Committee on Aging [held](#) a hearing entitled “Assisted Living Facilities: Understanding Long-Term Care Options for Older Adults.” The hearing focused on issues facing residents in assisted living facilities, their families, and the staff who care for them, along with potential policy solutions to address these issues.

WITNESSES

- [Patricia \(Patty\) Vessenmeyer](#), Advocate
- [Dr. Jennifer Craft Morgan](#), Director and Professor, Gerontology Institute, Georgia State University
- [Julie Simpkins](#), Co-President, Gardant Management Solutions
- [Richard Mollot](#), J.D., Executive Director, Long Term Care Community Coalition

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Committee Chair Bob Casey (D-PA) focused his opening statement on the costs of assisted living, the need to increase the wages of direct care workers, the safety of residents, and the letters he sent to three leading corporate owners of assisted living facilities. Ranking Member Mike Braun the challenges the aging population faces in assisted living (R-IN) used his opening statement to acknowledge the challenges the aging population faces in assisted living. Like Chair Casey (D-PA), he also mentioned workforce challenges, but he cited concerns that the Biden administration’s independent contractor [rule](#) could eliminate existing caregiver jobs. He also highlighted bipartisan legislation he has supported to address health workforce challenges, such as the [More Nurses Act](#) and the [JOBS Act](#). He also mentioned his concerns about one-size-fits-all federal regulations and instead pointed to state actions such as those in Indiana.

There was widespread agreement among senators and witnesses about the need to address care costs, improve transparency, and address the industry’s workforce challenges. However, Democratic senators were more open to the federal government setting standards for assisted living facilities. Chair Casey (D-PA), Sen. Mike Kelly (D-AZ), Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA), Sen. John Fetterman (D-PA), and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) all touched on increased federal involvement in their questions to witnesses. In contrast, Ranking Member Braun (R-IN) and Sen. Pete Ricketts (R-IN) focused more on examining how different states address concerns about quality and safety.

The hearing showcased a bipartisan desire to improve the affordability and quality of assisted living care. However, there also appears to be some disagreement on if changes should be implemented by the states or by the federal government.

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