

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

The Section 508 Refresh Act of 2024

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People with disabilities have a right to equal government access, including technology to facilitate access to government programs, information, and jobs. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act requires federal technology to be accessible for, and usable by, people with disabilities. However, Congressional oversight found that the federal government has failed to consistently make its websites, apps, kiosks, and other technology accessible for people with disabilities. Over 70 million U.S. adults already report having a disability and older adults are more likely to develop a disability. Older adults are a rapidly growing segment of the American population, meaning accessible federal technology is essential to continued widespread access to our Nation's programs, services, and information.

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Congress last made significant changes to Section 508 in 1998, when many federal agencies were just starting to use the internet, post online content, and have all government workers use computers. The Section 508 Refresh Act will enact long overdue updates to the law. Specifically, the Section 508 Refresh Act will require federal departments and agencies to include people with disabilities who consume government services and information or work as government employees in the acquisition and accessibility testing of federal technology. It will reform the complaint process for Section 508 and establish a new process for deciding what federal technology is purchased – with rigorous accountability requirements for ensuring the technology is accessible. The Section 508 Refresh Act will also require regular testing to ensure technology being used by federal departments and agencies is accessible to federal workers and all Americans using federal programs and information. Finally, the bill will require each federal department and agency to appoint qualified, dedicated Section 508 compliance officers to ensure the technology purchased and used by their departments and agencies is accessible.

Support for the Section 508 Refresh Act

The Section 508 Refresh Act is supported by the National Federation of the Blind and the National Association of the Deaf.

For more information, or to cosponsor, please contact Doug Hartman at Doug.Hartman@aging.senate.gov.