



# VIEW*&*VISIONS

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**Bob Casey**  
United States Senate

Robert P. (Bob) Casey, Jr. (D-PA) is the senior U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania. Senator Casey serves on four committees, including the Finance Committee, the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, and the Select Committee on Intelligence. He is also the Chairman of the Special Committee on Aging, where his agenda is focused on policies that support seniors and individuals with disabilities. Since being elected to the U.S. Senate in 2006, he has fought for the needs of workers, children, and families in the Commonwealth and across the Nation.

# Reaping the Benefits of Generational Investment

Earlier this year, I was in Pittsburgh when a bridge collapse shook Southwestern Pennsylvania. The collapse of the Fern Hollow Bridge was a sobering reminder of the work we have ahead to rebuild and fortify our region's critical infrastructure. When I visited the site with President Joe Biden and local leaders hours later, I felt a great sense of urgency but also of reassurance. President Biden had recently signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law, and funding was already beginning to reach communities in need. While we have years of work ahead, we finally have the resources to repair our infrastructure, thanks to President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Democrats in Congress.

chance of failing in the next five years. The consequences of such a failure for the local supply chain would be enormous: jobs, small businesses, and the region's economy would suffer. Now, thanks to the work of the Biden Administration and congressional Democrats, we have the means to shore up our supply chain and keep commerce flowing through Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Fern Hollow is not the only bridge we need to rebuild: Pennsylvania has almost 3,200 structurally deficient bridges, many of them located in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Washington County alone has 97 bridges in poor condition.<sup>[1]</sup> In Allegheny County, home

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**“...functioning roads, bridges, waterways, and high-speed internet are not a luxury in Southwestern Pennsylvania or anywhere else across the country. They're vital to the economic health of our communities.”**

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With plenty of critical infrastructure in need of improvement, Southwestern Pennsylvania stands to reap the benefits of this generational investment. In fact, the region has already begun to see an influx of funding for infrastructure projects in great need. Earlier this year, the Upper Ohio Navigation System, which makes our water infrastructure work, received hundreds of millions of dollars to help get much-needed construction over the finish line and prevent a potential disaster. Prior to this investment, the Montgomery Locks and Dam had a 50 percent

to the greatest number of bridges in the Commonwealth, that number increases to 123. <sup>[2]</sup> Bridges are deeply ingrained in this region's landscape and serve as vital connectors for our communities, spanning rivers, creeks, and valleys. There have been many presidents who have talked about investing in our Nation's infrastructure, but Joe Biden is the first to follow through in more than half a century. President Biden understands that places like Southwestern Pennsylvania can truly thrive when we build stronger infrastructure. And now, with the infrastructure law providing





Pennsylvania with \$1.6 billion for its bridges, we are finally going to make progress on fixing them.

When we think about what connects our region, roads, bridges, and waterways often come to mind. But in the 21st century, high-speed internet connectivity is just as vital. There are currently at least 394,000 Pennsylvanians who do not have access to broadband – in both rural and urban areas alike. Without high-speed internet, kids can't do their homework, families can't stay in touch, and local businesses can't stay competitive in an increasingly digital economy. It's never been more important for small businesses to use the internet to run their operations smoothly and expand their reach to new customers in the region and beyond. With hundreds of millions of dollars coming to Pennsylvania for high-speed internet expansion, the infrastructure law sets our kids, families, and businesses up for success.

President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Democrats in Congress worked to pass this bipartisan legislation because they know functioning roads, bridges, waterways, and high-speed internet are not a luxury in Southwestern Pennsylvania or anywhere else across the country. They're vital to the economic health of our communities.

Southwestern Pennsylvania will succeed because the people here have worked for decades to build, and rebuild, a brighter future. And now, with the federal investments made possible by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the region will get some of the support it deserves from Washington. **W**

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[1] <https://data.goerie.com/bridge/pennsylvania/washington/42125/>

[2] <https://data.goerie.com/bridge/pennsylvania/allegheeny/42003/>