

Patricia Rau personal testimony on HB 2818, age discrimination

TO: House Committee on Business and Labor, Rep. Barker, Chair

FROM: Patricia Rau, Lake Oswego

RE: Support for HB 2818

Chair Barker, members of the Committee, my name is Patricia Rau and I am a resident of Lake Oswego.

I am here to support House Bill 2818 because I have experienced age discrimination in the workplace, and Oregon's laws are insufficient to stop age discrimination.

As an aging population tries to continue their careers past their 50's, 60's, and 70's this issue takes on increasing importance. We are living longer and our finances and the need to continue a fulfilling life doesn't necessarily let us retire. Some of us want to and some of us have to keep working past 50!

My career background is in both large and small technology companies and finally in the philanthropic world of Family Foundations. My expertise is in seeing new trends and technologies and partnering in ways that allow products to go to market more quickly collectively.

After being laid off at a mid-sized technology company due to a merger, I was able to leverage my partnership contacts to get a job as a Business Development and Strategic Alliances in Mobile Communications (Bluetooth & WIFI wireless printing) at a large international technology company in Boise Idaho. I was 50 years old. When I went to pick up my security badge I was told "I could not be a new hire as I was too old and must be a contractor! We don't hire people that as old as you". Yes, my first real first-hand experience in age discrimination.

In 2007, after nine wonderful years at this company, I could see that through a series of several work force reductions that people my age were now very likely to be let go. We were more expensive than the younger employees. When offered, I took early retirement fully thinking I could find other work. I was told at the Oregon State Employment classes that it was highly unlikely that I would find replacement work at my level of seniority or pay. It was true.

I sent out hundreds of resumes, took classes on find a new position, connected with colleagues, and revised each resume to fit the position and got only a few interviews. This was also the beginning of the recent recession. The one opportunity that still remains in mind was with another large company in Oregon with a position exactly like the one I had at the company in Boise/Vancouver. I did the interview (I know how to write a resume so you can't really tell how old I am), had 10 phone interviews at all levels of the company, and I got an interview. When the hiring manager meet me in their lobby, his face fell. He was not pleased to see a mature woman. Trust me, sometimes you just know that look and you do not forget it. I was rushed through the interview process and did not get the job.

Shortly after that experience, I was offered a volunteer position at a family foundation as a Program Manager with a focus on providing funding to environmental and arts and culture focused non-profits (NGO's). This work allowed me to learn to move from the business world into philanthropic world. After

another 9 years, I saw a similar but paid position and I was a perfect fit! After many phone conversations, I got the face-to-face interview and once again saw the face of the hiring manager's face drop as she met me in the lobby. I did not get the job. I was not told why but I can assume some things.

You can teach us how to write resumes, do great interviews, but we must have an even playing field with corporations big and small, NGO's and Foundations to work again. State regulations and education of hiring personnel would give us a chance. Whether it is for me or all those coming behind me, please consider the following:

House Bill 2818 would make it

- So, non-discrimination laws could be enforced more readily.
- So employers would have less of an incentive to discriminate against older workers.

I urge you to support House Bill 2818.

Patricia Rau

Lake Oswego OR