

House Bill 2938 Age Discrimination Task Force

Public Hearing February 15, 2021, House Committee on Business and Labor

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Mr. Chair, members of the Committee, my name is John Mullin, and I am testifying as a private citizen, working with the broad coalition of organizations supporting HB 2938.

By way of brief background information, I have been engaged in human service issues for 45 years, principally concerned with advocacy for and with older Oregonians, people with disabilities, and individuals and families with low incomes.

I worked on age discrimination as the fill in/temporary lobbyist for AARP in the 2019 session. When the efforts of our coalition fell short on HB 2818, a comprehensive age discrimination bill, I engaged by invitation in post session meetings with the Speaker, the Bureau of Labor and Industries, AFL-CIO, the Oregon Trial Lawyers Association, and Oregon Business & Industry. As we did not have consensus on the framework for an age discrimination bill, I suggested the idea of a task force. This led to a bill to convene such a task force in HB 4076 in 2020.

While HB 4076 had a very good hearing, and was sent on to Ways and Means with a “do pass,” the bill did not emerge due to unrelated factors regarding a lack of quorum, and a very limited number of bills actually passed in the 2020 session.

And that brings up to HB 2938, identical to the 2020 bill. I am in total support of the bill as drafted. Although some may wish to amend the bill, I believe the proposed make-up of the task force is the right configuration. Assuming passage, I do not expect to be selected to represent the slot for a “statewide nonprofit organization that advocates on behalf of working or retired seniors.” That said, I feel that I will have ample opportunity to give input to the task force. By extension, I don’t believe anyone should feel constrained from giving input, simply because they are not selected for the task force.

I urge your support of HB 2938. Thank you for your consideration.

